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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Confirms Names of Perpetrators of 25 Feb Bombings

TA2902093696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A leaflet issued by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Hebron announces that Ibrahim Farhanah and Majdi Abu-Wardah, residents of the al-Fawwar refugee camp near Nabulus, were the perpetrators of the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. Hamas says it will continue to stage terrorist attacks until the occupation is uprooted from every drop of Palestinian soil. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem points out that this is the first time Hamas has confirmed that the two terrorists indeed perpetrated the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

Palestinian Affairs: Alliance Issues Statement on Operations, Arrest Campaign

JN2802185096 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Statement by the Alliance of the Palestinian Forces in Damascus; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Alliance of the Palestinian Forces [APF] conveys its warm greetings to the heroic martyrs who carried out the heroic operations in Jerusalem and Ashqelon in a show of rejection of our people's masses to the agreements of liquidation concluded with the enemy and as real demonstration baptized with blood reflecting the essence of the Palestinian people's position. This position is determined to continue jihad, struggle, and resistance until the occupying invaders are expelled and until the realization of the Palestinian people's nationalist objectives of liberation, return, and full national independence.

The APF is following with deep concern the measures being carried out by the proxy self-rule administration, represented by arresting the strugglers and mujahidin. The APF believes that these measures meet the demands of the Zionist enemy, which wants to strike at the structure of the struggling Palestinian forces, disarm our people, and extradite strugglers and mujahidin with all the huge risks that these measures and steps entail, and which pave the way for inciting internal sedition ignited by 'Arafat and his team to serve the interests and security of the Zionist entity.

The APF warns the proxy self-rule administration against continuing implementation of the enemy's objectives, and holds it fully responsible for the destructive results of these measures.

The Alliance sends warm greetings to the masses of our Palestinian people in the occupied homeland and the diaspora, and emphasizes its determination to continue struggle and jihad until our people's objectives of liberation, return, and full independence are attained.

[Signed] The Alliance of the Palestinian Forces

Palestinian Affairs: Officer Reports 250 Activists Arrested in 'Past Few Days'

TA2902062996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Palestinian Police officer in Gaza says that the Palestinian Police have already arrested 250 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists as part of the investigations they have been conducting over the past few days. 'Abd-al-Raziq al-Majayidah told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the police searched for weapons in several places in the Palestinian Authority and that the searches and arrests continue. All civilians have until 2 March to turn in their weapons to the police. As of next week, anybody in possession of unlicensed weapons will be brought to trial.

Palestinian Affairs: West Bank Hamas Leader Calls For Dialogue With Israelis

MM2902114396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih: "Islamic Movement Leader in West Bank Talks to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT About Mediation; Truce Plan Between Hamas and Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — A figure close to the Islamic Resistance Movement "Hamas" has called for an end to what he termed "rivers of blood" between the Palestinians and Israelis and for a dialogue between Hamas and the Israelis with a view to arriving at a truce and an agreement, as he put it. The figure also called for a formula to be found to defuse the dispute with the Palestinian Authority [PA] and an assessment of what has been achieved in the peace process so far.

Shaykh Jamil Hamami, an Islamist associated with Hamas in Ramallah in the West Bank, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "I am not delegated by anyone. I am proposing a plan to Hamas and the Israelis." However, he did not specify the nature of the plan.

Shaykh Hamami added: "Nothing is impossible. I am not that pessimistic, and it is possible to find a mechanism for a dialogue, maybe through a third party or the PA away from upheavals." He stressed his willingness to play a role in the dialogue, emphasizing that he is delegated by no one. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Hamami said: "All I am saying is merely an appeal requiring crystallization, a mechanism, and the need for the two sides to sound out one another. I see no objection to me playing a role."

Shaykh Hamami urged the PA to be patient and not to submit to Israeli pressures and blackmail calling for a program to be drawn up to fight Hamas, arrest certain figures, and disarm Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. He said: "I believe — regardless of the Israeli demands — that defining the relationship between the PA and the other Palestinian organizations and movement is an internal Palestinian affair that has nothing to do with anyone else."

Hamami called for a formula to be found for dealings away from Israeli blackmail, which is aimed at exploding the Palestinian situation. Shaykh Hamami said that "what happened last Sunday [25 February] should really be tackled in a sound manner. Everyone rejects bloodshed. But the clear reality is that the undeclared and unagreed state of truce that had existed between Hamas and Israel for months was violated by Israel's assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash (explosives expert in the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions) in Gaza. But how long will we remain in this situation...revenge and threats of revenge. It will lead us to nothing but rivers of blood."

It is worth mentioning here that Shaykh Hamami is a moderate figure. According to him, he — accompanied by two Hamas leaders, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar and Talal al-Sidr — held a dialogue with Rabbi Fruman [as transliterated] last month. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Paper Calls For Putting End to Hamas' 'Irresponsible' Acts

TA2802190296 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Editorial: "Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Responsibility"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With the introduction of the strength that began to leave its mark on Palestinian negotiating performance; and with the beginning of Palestinian confrontation of all Israeli violations on crossings, at the Rafah airport, in al-Mawasi, on Netzarim road, around Rachel's Tomb, at the bypass roads, in the settlements, and over the Allenby Bridge — with this strong beginning — came the Jerusalem blast to destroy the strength of the Palestinian position and delay Hebron's liberation.

Moreover, this explosion sought to restore confusion and turmoil to our Palestinian arena which has just emerged from the experience of the legislative elections, with all their significance, and with certificates of merit in which our people take pride.

We did not need the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations, and neither did Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], assuming that Hamas' decision was free and independent. If we are to believe the statement of "the new pupils," Hamas' demands, confined to releasing Hamas detainees and stopping the manhunt of its activists do not justify the operation, especially since in its statement Hamas categorically promises to adopt a new and historic stance.

The Palestinian people's destiny and rights are a national responsibility. The one undertaking this responsibility is the Palestinian leadership, led by President Yasir 'Arafat, who has been elected by his people in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. He has also been chosen by all his people as chairman of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. These leading and representative qualities have their own meaning and legitimacy. No one has the right to tamper with the destiny of our people by individualistic military operations that have no aim but to halt the people's advance in achieving more of their rights, freedom, and political and economic stability.

Hamas should step out into the street to hear and see the Palestinian street's reaction to what it did. It should wake up. Neither the people nor their national, combatant, and experienced leadership, which has a militant, historic, and popular legitimacy will accept that an agitated and narrow mentality play with the people's destiny, rights, and stability.

The responsibility shouldered by our people's historical leadership, embodied in President 'Arafat; by the people's elected deputies; and by all the national leaders requires a national, frank, and responsible soul-searching that puts a total end to these irresponsible practices which harm and weaken us.

The Palestinian people, who have a long combatant history and who have given many sacrifices, will not accept becoming captives of irresponsible actions.

If the Palestinian leadership is faithful to its commitments and responsibilities, the Israeli Government should adopt a responsible stance cognizant of the joint goals which unite certain Palestinian and Israeli parties that are seeking to wreck the peace process. Closure and inflicting losses on the Palestinian people are not effective remedies either on the security or political levels. Furthermore, Israeli encroachment on the national area's sanctity will not bring about a response other than extremism, as Yahya 'Ayyash's assassination proved. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Council Member Fears Israel Now 'Playing Into Hamas' Hands'

JN2802213596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 28 Feb 96

[From "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has hinted at the possibility that Israel may not implement the interim agreement, especially redeployment in Hebron scheduled by the end of next month. On Peres' remarks, Marwan Kanafani, member of the Legislative Council, made the following statement to our radio:

[Begin Kanafani recording] In view of these remarks, we fear that Israel is now playing into Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] hands. Such demands do not harm Hamas but harms the PLO, the National Authority, and the entire peace process. I believe that the prime minister should confer with the president in order to agree on a way to enable us to come out of this impasse and ensure that such criminal operations against civilians in Israel do not recur and so that we might reach peace. To punish the Palestinian people, authority, and president because of this operation will place us in a position serving the aim of those who carried out the operations. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Partially Lifts Closure on Territories

JN2902095896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation authorities partially lifted the closure imposed on the Palestinian territories at dawn today, 29 February.

It has been learned that trucks carrying goods from the Gaza Strip can cross the Bayt Hanun crossing after a thorough search. It has also been learned that newspapers published in Jerusalem have started to be received in Gaza.

A [Palestinian] Labor Ministry report mentions that the recurrent Israeli closure has resulted in a loss of $726 million.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Losses From Closures Said To Total Over $700 Million

TA2902085196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Security sources say the closure will be eased the moment 'Arafat proves he is fighting the terrorist infrastructure in the territories. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority [PA] claims that since it took over the autonomy, it has lost over $700 million as a result of the closures imposed by Israel. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] A senior security source confirmed that the closure on the territories will be eased and workers will be allowed to enter Israel only after 'Arafat proves that he is fighting the infrastructure of the terrorist organizations. Israel will ease the passage of goods through the Qarni crossing in the Gaza Strip and be lenient on humanitarian issues, but no compromise will be made on the entry of Arabs into the boundaries of the Green Line. The burden of proof now lies with 'Arafat, the source said. The defense establishment believes that 'Arafat will evince determination in his fight against terror, at least until after the redeployment in Hebron and the Israeli elections. As for what will happen afterward, nobody is prepared to prophecy.

The PA claims that since it took over the autonomy, it has lost $726 million — a sum far exceeding all the aid it has received to date from the donor countries — as a result of the closures imposed by Israel. The PA claims that every day of closure inflicts a loss of 4 million shekels and that nobody compensates the 50,000 workers employed in Israel for their loss of income.

Israel has imposed a closure on the territories in reaction to terrorist attacks eight times since the PA took over the autonomy. The Palestinians argue that the closures interfere with trade and increase unemployment and that the local Palestinian job market cannot absorb the thousands of Palestinian workers employed in Israel. The Palestinians consider the closure a collective punishment and a political means of pressure which affects the PA and encourages radical elements.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 29 February adds that "Major General Shlomo Yanay, commander of the Southern Command, has allowed the passage of goods from the Gaza Strip into Israel. The political level in Jerusalem announced yesterday that the passage of goods would start this morning, but the Southern Command prevented it at dawn today and held a series of consultations which ended a short time ago in a decision to allow the passage of goods."]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Warns of Israeli, Palestinian Extremist Meetings

BR2902112996 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 29 Feb 96 p 14

[Interview with Palestinian Authority President Yasir 'Arafat by Giorgio Lonardi in Gaza; date not given: "'Arafat: Pact To Sabotage Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — [Lonardi] Mr. President, following the attacks in Jerusalem there is a great deal of anxiety in Italy and Europe as a whole with regard to the continuation of the Middle East peace process.

['Arafat] We are sure that Rabin was killed by a representative of an extremist Israeli group. Just as we know that there is a pact between Israeli and Palestinian extremists to obstruct peace.

[Lonardi] Those are weighty assertions....

['Arafat] Avishai Raviv [name as published], the head of the Jewish extremist organization, Aial, said in an interview granted the day before Rabin's assassination that he had met with representatives of the Jihad. And he said that it was not the first time. These are all things that I can prove. I have documentary evidence.

Yasir 'Arafat's replies were peremptory. This was a tough Yasir 'Arafat, the exact opposite of the affable statesman that received the Confindustria [Italian General Confederation of Industry] delegation at his Gaza headquarters shortly before. The interview that 'Arafat referred to leaves no room for doubt: "We and the Jihad," it says, "are agreed on destroying the peace process."

The leaders of Hamas and the Jihad wanted to continue their meetings, but the Jewish group apparently dropped them "in order to continue behaving as is proper with your enemies." And that was not all. Avishai Raviv said that the Jihad representatives were very worried, which is why the Jewish extremist organization decided not to announce its meetings with the Islamic fundamentalists — and this discretion was justified partly by the anxiety not to grant any scope for 'Arafat's pacifist ideas.

[Lonardi] This is news. Why did you not mention it before?

['Arafat] It is not real news. Last summer, first at Harvard University and later in meetings with the American Jewish communities, I referred to the existence of this evil pact between the two extremist groups.

[Lonardi] Mr. President, do you have any other proof of what you are saying?

['Arafat] Less than an hour after the attack in Jerusalem, even before the details of the assassination were announced by the Israeli authorities, they were supplied by Zeev Rahaban [name as published], leader of the Jewish extremist movement, Moledet. There is no way out of this: Either they carried out the attack or it proves close cooperation between them and the authors of the outrage.

[Lonardi] Who leads the terrorists?

['Arafat] The terrorists' supporters are abroad. The leaders of Palestinian extremism are in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and Iran. The Israelis' supporters are in Brooklyn.

[Lonardi] How can terrorism be defeated?

['Arafat] The only solution for defeating terrorism is to accelerate the peace process. Restrictive provisions causing slowness or delays in the military withdrawal, however, could prove fatal. This is why I appeal to the resolute supporters of the peace process: We must combat terrorism steadfastly and at the same time accelerate the peace process.

[Lonardi] The Israelis are talking about obstructing Hebron's return to Palestinian hands in order to counter terrorism.

['Arafat] There is tension in Hebron following the Israelis' partial, withdrawal, but we are not in Hebron. The attack occurred in Jerusalem, but I am not in Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Chief Orders Unlicensed Weapons Surrendered

JN2802173396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brigadier General Ghazi al-Jabali, director general of the Palestinian police has said that President Yasir 'Arafat issued a decision to form a military field court. Brig. Gen. al-Jabali said that the court consists of Brig. Gen. Sa'di Naji, commander of the national security forces in Nabulus, and Brig. Gen. Ziyad 'Urayf, head of the Nabulus police department.

Al-Jabali said that this court was formed to try Colonel 'Abd-al-Rahim Abu-'Awn, head of the national security department in Qalqiliyah, and Col. Musa Jadallah, head of the Qalqiliyah police department, for their behavior and actions that violate the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. Brig. Gen. al-Jabali added that the military field court began its first session this morning in the city of Jericho and that the verdicts will be issued later.

In another development, the Palestinian General Police Department has announced that the deadline for handing in unlicensed weapons will expire on 1 March. Brig. Gen. al-Jabali said the Palestinian police will launch campaigns and storming operations in all the Palestinian governorates to seize unlicensed weapons regardless of who owns them. Brig. Gen. al-Jabali asserted that all suspects and seized weapons will be referred to the public prosecutor. All those carrying unlicensed weapons will be prosecuted in accordance with the penal code.

The General Police Department announced to all the citizens in all the governorates to hand in their unlicensed weapons no later than the deadline.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Tibi Interviewed on PA Activity To Combat 'Terror'

TA2902090996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, adviser to PA President Yasir 'Arafat, by anchorman Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Will the pressure currently being exerted by Israel on 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority [PA] finally convince him to give top priority to wiping out the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorist organization?

[Al-Tibi] I think that the PA and its chairman feel a deep internal conviction on this issue and do not need the massive and crass pressure exerted in the last two or three days by Israeli decisionmakers.

[Golan] There is a reason for this, and you probably know it. We need not remind you of the reason for this crass pressure.

[Al-Tibi] I think that cooperation can be attained in accordance with the agreements signed by Israel and the PA without crass pressure and without the odd and bizarre advice, such as that of Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq in a meeting with representatives of the donor countries, in which he demanded that they pressure the PA to take action and proposed that Yasir 'Arafat emulate what leaders of Arab countries do to Islamic movements. To those who did not catch his drift, what he meant was that 'Arafat should mow down tens of thousands of Palestinian Muslims as Hafiz al-Asad did in Hamah. If somebody thinks Yasir 'Arafat will be a mass executioner, he is wrong. If somebody thinks Yasir 'Arafat must abide by the agreements and see to it that....

[Golan, interrupting] Not only does he not eradicate terror, but he does not collect illegal weapons either. After all, according to all the agreements, there can be only one armed force in the territories — that is, the Palestinian Police — but we know that this is not the case.

[Al-Tibi] The PA did not make its decision to collect weapons in response to the request of Israeli Government officials in the last two days but after....

[Golan, interrupting] But the agreements have been in effect for almost two years.

[Al-Tibi] That is correct. The PA made this decision after the events at Gaza's Filastin Mosque over a year ago. The process has been slow and, in my opinion, ineffective. Therefore, the PA decided to step up the pace — incidentally, not a few days ago but months ago — as a result of internal criticism. The pace of arms collection was stepped up in recent weeks. I think that the PA, out of deep internal Palestinian conviction, must not allow any Palestinian — neither members of Hamas nor members of Fatah — who is not a policeman or who does not have a security job to carry unlicensed weapons.

[Golan] You live in Israel, and you know that many Israelis do not believe that 'Arafat really wants to eliminate Hamas. One assessment is that he wants Hamas to be there when negotiations start on the permanent arrangement so that its terrorist actions can pressure the Israeli Government to make concessions.

[Al-Tibi] Excuse me, who said that 'Arafat must eliminate Hamas? 'Arafat should not eliminate Hamas, which is a political movement encompassing one-third of the Palestinian people.

[Golan] It is a political movement that blows up buses and kills people. What sort of political movement is that? What is political about it?

[Al-Tibi] There is a difference between Hamas as a political movement and military battalions that employ terror. These battalions are or must be dealt with by the PA with more determination than in the past owing to the fact that the Palestinian people are paying a heavy price for the horrendous terrorist actions of a few dozen activists. They are a shame and disgrace to the entire Palestinian people and to me personally as a Palestinian citizen and as a Muslim. This is an internal Palestinian affair. No terrorist battalions should be allowed to pursue their activities within the boundaries of the PA, but nothing should be done against Hamas as a political movement. Hamas includes political members who do not engage in terrorist activities, and they must not be eradicated. 'Arafat should not be urged to do things that are not allowed by Palestinian law. Palestinian law is sufficiently broad, firm, and effective, and it needs only to be implemented.

[Golan] And we want to see results. Thank you, Mr. al-Tibi.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Trial for Police Officers in 'Ayyash Rally

TA2802191396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority has taken the first measures in the wake of Israel's demand that it fight terror. Ghazi al-Jabali, commander of the Palestinian Police, ordered all civilians within the boundaries of the autonomy in possession of illegal weapons to turn them in to the Palestinian Police by 2 March. He announced that policemen will conduct raids and searches next week and anybody found in possession of weapons will be brought to trial.

'Arafat ordered that a drumhead court-martial be set up to hold summary trials for two senior Palestinian Police officers holding the rank of colonel who took part in the memorial rally for terrorist Yahya 'Ayyash. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that one of the officers was seen on television trampling over an Israeli flag.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Economy Minister Interviewed

MM2802140496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 6

[Interview with Ahmad Quray', economy minister in the PA, by Khalil 'Abd-Rabbuh in Jerusalem; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Abd-Rabbuh] There has recently been an increase in the intensity of measures such as land seizure and the closure of the Palestinian areas for long periods, not forgetting that the issue of the prisoners has not been resolved yet.... How will the Palestinian side face this situation?

[Quray'] The Israeli side has not abided by the agreement's text or spirit. It has breached the agreement on many fundamental issues. First, on the issue of prisoners, which is causing a great deal of embarrassment for us with our people, the prisoners, and their families. According to the terms of the agreement, Israel should have released all prisoners, with the exception of 220 prisoners, who, as agreed, would have their situation reviewed. Israel has no right to unilaterally decide who is to be released and who is not. I would like to stress that, for us, the prisoners issue is a political, national, and moral commitment and we will continue to make every effort to resolve it.

The second issue of great concern to us is the issue of Jerusalem and the settlements. It was agreed that this issue should be postponed to the final status negotiations, provided that neither side takes measures which would harm the other side's rights or tries to change the situation on the ground. What we have now is land seizure on the pretext of building bypass roads, and expansion of the settlements, despite former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's promise that no settlement's boundaries will extend further than 50 meters beyond the last house in it.

Worse still is the fact that Israeli Housing Minister Ben-Eli'ezer is now an expert at announcing new confiscation and new projects for building Israeli homes on Palestinian land. With regard to Jerusalem, there is an attempt to stifle it and isolate it from the other Palestinian areas by setting up road blocks and attempting to limit Palestinian activity there.

['Abd-Rabbuh] There have recently been some meetings with the Israeli side, and these issues were reportedly discussed. What is the Israeli side's reaction when you confront it with these issues?

[Quray'] Unfortunately, we have not received from the Israeli side any reassurancs that they are abiding by the requirements of peace. If these violations continue, they will pose a threat to the peace process as a whole and will not help in the final status negotiations.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Every time it meets with it, the U.S. sponsor is constantly asking the PLO to amend the Palestinian charter, on the grounds that the PLO should abide by its international commitments. Have you asked the U.S. sponsor to demand the same from the Israelis, namely to respect what they signed?

[Quray'] Yes, we have informed the sponsor of the peace process, the United States, as well as Russia and the EU, of our positions. We have stressed that nothing will change the fact that East Jerusalem is occupied Palestinian territory and that the settlements are hostile and illegal actions. Undoubtedly, the U.S. side has a great moral responsibility. First, as a superpower, second, as the main sponsor of the peace process, and third, as the host on whose soil all agreements were signed. In my view, the U.S. side has not made a satisfactory and determined effort to put an end to Israeli violations, especially with regard to Jerusalem and the settlements issue. We must not forget that the previous U.S. Administration made it a condition of issuing of the credit guarantees that were offered that none of these funds would be spent on settlements or construction in the occupied territories.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Do you believe that the Palestinian side should "freeze" the implementation of its commitments on some issues, such as discussing the charter, for example, until such time as the Israeli side abides by its commitments?

[Quray'] No. I am in favor of the Palestinian side abiding by its international commitments, and at the same time making every effort to force the Israelis to respect these agreements. With regard to the national charter, the PLO has called the [Palestine] National Council [PNC] to hold a session to discuss the charter issue. When it convenes, the PNC is its own master and will decide or discuss whatever it wants.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Recently, some debate, still at the stage of "murmurs," has started on how to organize relations between the PLO, as the executive committee, and the PNC on one side, and the Palestinian Authority [PA] institutions such as the Legislative Council and the "government" on the other. What are your views on this matter?

[Quray'] I do not see any problems at all in this matter, although the conflict of powers is a Palestinian characteristic of which we cannot deprive ourselves. The PNC's well-known role is to formulate general policy and strategy. The Legislative Council is in charge of local Palestinian affairs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and is guided by the general policies drawn up by the PNC. Here I would like to clarify a very controversial issue, namely about the Legislative Council being part of the PNC. This is not correct. Legislative Council members are PNC members. This does not mean at all, however, that the Legislative Council takes orders from the PNC. In addition, a committee was formed to draw up the statutes and regulations governing relations between the PLO and its organs on one side, and its [the PLO's] institutions on the other.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Some time ago, you announced that you will allow imports to the Palestinian areas only through Palestinian agents and businessmen. This has upset the Israelis who saw the matter as a breach of the economic agreement with them. What were the reasons behind your decision, and how valid are the Israeli remarks?

[Quray'] We are entitled to have all our imports through Palestinian agents and businessmen. This is an issue stated in the economic agreement with Israel. This agreement states that trade between us is free. This matter revolves mainly around agencies of the major companies such as Coca Cola, car dealers, etc.... The problem is that Israel allows its companies to sell everything to Palestinian buyers while preventing Israeli buyers from buying from Palestinian agents. The best example of this is that when some Palestinian businessmen obtained dealerships for major car companies, Israel prevented Palestinian businessmen buying from Palestinian agents [sentence as published]. This Israeli attitude is what constitutes a breach of the economic agreement with us.

['Abd-Rabbuh] You are in charge of following up on funds from donor states. Are there any developments? Will they be paid out smoothly or are matters still as they were, subject to delays and disagreement?

[Quray'] I believe that we can only build our economy by relying on ourselves. This is not an exaggeration. It is a fact. Basically, we must make every effort to attract the Palestinian investor abroad and encourage the Palestinian investor in the homeland. We must provide all incentives for the private sector to increase its initiative and activities. The more we encourage investments, the more we guarantee a comprehensive and lasting economic development and provide additional revenues to the PA, because the more the volume of capital grows, the more revenues there are from taxes, duties, etc....

['Abd-Rabbuh] I understand from what you are saying that you do not rely much on the donor states' assistance?

[Quray'] Of course, it is necessary to take advantage of the donor states' grants, although I believe that the volume of their assistance and grants is not commensurate with our people's burden and needs. As you know, the total volume of these donations and assistance does not exceed $2.5 billion over five years. So far, $800 million has been spent as follows: $350 million to set up the institutions and cover the organs' expenses and salaries, $200 million for technical assistance, and the rest, that is $250 million, was spent on infrastructure projects. Therefore, only $1.6 billion remains with the donor states, half of it in grants and the other half in loans. [all figures as published]

Palestinian Affairs: Paper Urges Israel To Learn 'Useful Lessons' From Bombings

MM2902092996 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Suicide Attacks and the Justifications Prompting Them"]

[FBIS Translated Text] For the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, to announce "qualified intentions" to suspend military operations against Israeli targets means that the movement is adopting this line not as a one-sided [uhadiyyat al-janib] strategy, but as a means to achieve political objectives.

If we look at the two recent suicide operations carried out by the movement's military wing in occupied Jerusalem and Ashqelon, we will find that they were carried out in response to Israeli provocations represented in the assassination 50 days ago of Engineer

Yahya 'Ayyash, who was an expert on booby-trapped cars, even in areas under the Palestinian National Authority's [PNA] control.

One should register in favor of Hamas its observation of self-restraint and desire to continue the dialogue with the PNA to benefit as much as possible from the Oslo agreements without increasing the Palestinian people's suffering under the occupation.

When the movement's leadership realized that military operations had been used by the Israeli authorities as an excuse to suspend the negotiations and the withdrawal from Palestinian cities and villages and to close the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it hastened to suspend them, demonstrating an extraordinary ability to restrain its extremist elements, who are opposed to a truce and believe that military action is the only language the occupation authorities understand.

It remains useful to understand the reasons and motives that led to the violating of the truce and the resumption of military action in the form of the two recent operations. The movement suffered considerable political losses recently when its hard-liners succeeded in "defeating" the orientations of its moderates, who had warned against boycotting the elections and thought that participation in the elections would secure numerous gains. The huge turnout reflected the decline in the movement's influence among the people, the lack of response to its calls for boycotting the elections, and the existence of an absolute majority supportive of the peace process and wishing it to continue.

As a result of this bitter reality, in addition to 'Ayyash's assassination and the assassination of Islamic Jihad Movement leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi in Malta, there was a need to remind people of the presence of the Islamic opposition in a dramatic manner to achieve huge media publicity, hence the two operations in occupied Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

Now that the two operations in question have achieved the desired political and informational aims, Hamas has once again raised the truce banner, setting a condition for Israel, namely to refrain from pursuing its leaders and elements. It is awaiting a reply.

The Israeli reply will most likely be negative. Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, who has been the biggest loser as a result of the two operations, announced his intention of pursuing and destroying Hamas, urging the PNA, his partner in the peace process, to join him in this endeavor. The latter responded swiftly by launching an arrest campaign against Islamists.

Peres would be mistaken if he thought that Israeli pursuit and murder operations against members of the Islamic opposition were going to bear fruit or lead to a halt to military operations. Because that would mean escalating the cycle of violence and counterviolence, an endless cycle in which it is difficult for any party to achieve victory.

The Israeli theory allowing the Israelis to kill anyone who embarks on violent actions against them is destructive. It is also an ugly racist theory which reflects blind hatred and a spirit that has nothing to do with tolerance.

Why is Israel asking the Palestinians to forgive old terrorists such as Sharon, Baraq, Shahaq, and even Rabin himself, whose hands are stained with blood as a result of the massacres they committed, while its leaders have not asked for the same thing with regard to Palestinians such as 'Ayyash, al-Shaqaqi, and others, who exercised a natural right that is exercised by all other peoples, that is, military action against forces occupying their land and settlers armed to the teeth in illegal settlements?

Building trust, reassuring the other side, and exercising tolerance are major steps toward peace. The assassination of Engineer 'Ayyash at a time when his movement was committed to the truce conflicts with all these steps.

We hope that Peres and his aides will learn useful lessons from the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations, abandon the language of threats and intimidation, and keep away from any electioneering one-upmanship. Was it not Peres who said that winning peace was more important to him than winning the parliamentary elections?!

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Damascus Radio Reports Resumption of Maryland Talks

JN2802214596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—A new round of talks between the Syrian, Israeli, and U.S. delegations began in the U.S. State of Maryland near Washington tonight.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Al-Mu'allim Repeats Condemnation of Bombings; Teams Discuss Security

TA2902060596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the American state of Maryland, another round of negotiations has begun between Israel and Syria. At the start of the first session, the heads of the delegations delivered opening statements.

Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim opened with a condemnation of the attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon on Sunday [25 February]. He also quoted from the newspaper SYRIA TIMES, which had stated its disapproval of terrorist actions.

The Maryland talks, mediated by the United States, dealt in their first day with security arrangements.

Algeria

Algeria: FLN Member Says Party Ready for Dialogue With Government

LD2802190896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 28 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Central Committee of the FLN [National Liberation Front] today continued its proceedings in camera at the El Djazair hotel. The issues at the center of this session are the renewal of the political bureau of the party and the holding of a congress. [passage omitted]

Among the candidates for membership in the political bureau is Abderrahmane Belyat, who is in favor of distancing the party from the Rome Contract and is in favor of a positive attitude regarding the government.

[Begin Belyat recording] The Central Committee has given clear instructions concerning the forthcoming congress, its methods, and the various stages of preparation for it. This means that the replacement of the secretary general had a positive effect on at least two things: the distancing of the party from what one may call the document signed in Rome, and promoting a more constructive attitude within national political life, particularly regarding the president of the republic.

This means leaving the task of running the country to the government and engaging in a constructive opposition role. The FLN henceforth will observe a constructive attitude toward what is happening in the political scene. If the president calls for dialogue, we are ready to contribute. [end recording]

Algeria: UGTA Threatens To Renew Strikes

LD2802232196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the meetings which brought together the National Secretariat, the National Federations, and the National Trade Unions of the Algerian General Workers Union [UGTA], the UGTA has renewed its demand that the decision of Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia to dock the salaries of workers and employees be rescinded. The UGTA has called on workers to be mobilized and to remain vigilant and not to yield to provocations and maneuvers which do not serve the interests of the workers.

Moreover, the UGTA threatened to resort once again to strike action if the prime minister's decision is not rescinded. It also affirmed that it remained ready for talks.

Algeria: Government Discusses 5-Year Economic Development Plan

LD2802200196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia today chaired a Council of Government meeting that discussed and approved the draft program of the government to be submitted to the Council of Ministers in the next few days for examination and approval before being finally presented before the Transitional National Council. In addition to assessing the current situation and determining the major challenges of the future, this draft program, which is based on three main points, consists of two aspects. The first aspect is about laying down the foundations for a five-year strategy for national development. The second aspect concerns the government's plan of action for 1996. The contents of this program will be disclosed to the public after it has been submitted to the legislative body.

The Council of Government also examined and approved the draft presidential decree on establishing a higher council for education which was presented by the minister of national education. This text, which was discussed by an inter-ministerial council on 1 February, defines the tasks of the higher council for education, its structure, and composition.

This council will be a national framework for consultations and coordination to examine and assess issues relating to education and training. It will be made up of representatives of state institutions, elected members representing teachers and trainers, and representatives of parents associations and higher education students.

The higher council for education will have an open assembly, a bureau chairman, and five permanent committees specialized in education, training of trainers, research, studies for the future, and monitoring and assessing the environment.

The Council of Government also discussed and approved a number of other decisions.

Algeria: World Bank Grants $400 Million Credit Line

LD2802201796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The World Bank board has decided to grant Algeria a further credit line, estimated at $400 million until the end of June 1996. According to a World Bank source, $300 million of the aforementioned amount, which is part of the program of strategic aid to states, will be used for the restructuring program. The remaining $100 million will be used in the partial financing of the social safety net and the program for the elimination of shantytowns.

These programs will be discussed at future meetings of Algerian and World Bank experts with a view to releasing the funds. It is worth mentioning that the talks on the program of strategic aid to states, when they concerned Algeria, were an opportunity for several delegates of member states on the World Bank board to confirm the good results achieved by Algeria in implementing the restructuring program agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund about a year ago.

Algeria: Security Forces Report 15 'Criminals' Killed

LD2702192496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services said in a statement today that their forces killed 15 criminals during various manhunt operations carried out in the provinces of Algiers, Blida, Boumerdes, and Tizi Ouzou during the last three days.

The statement added that the security forces recovered a quantity of weapons and ammunition during these operations.

Egypt

Egypt: 'Arafat Arrives in Cairo, Criticizes Israeli Measures

NC2802175696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1728 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived here tonight on a short visit.

He was received by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first foreign ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

In his statement at Cairo Airport, 'Arafat said he regretted the measures taken by Israel against the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He said: The West Bank's crossing points have been closed completely—not only to the workers and employees but also to exports and imports—to the extent that Gaza is now suffering from a shortage of wheat. This is in addition to the unreasonable security measures that are a clear violation of what has been agreed upon.

'Arafat is due to meet with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa tonight and President Husni Mubarak tomorrow morning.

Egypt: Mubarak Holds Talks With 'Arafat on Peace

NC2902090096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0735 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Feb (MENA)—Presidents Husni Mubarak and Yasir 'Arafat held private talks at the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis this morning. They discussed the status of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track in light of recent events, the general situation of the Middle East peace process on its various tracks, and economic conditions in the Palestinian self-rule area.

Palestinian President 'Arafat arrived in Cairo last night.

Egypt: Expanded Meeting With Palestinian Delegation Held

NC2902090796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0815 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Feb (MENA)—Presidents Husni Mubarak and Yasir 'Arafat held an expanded meeting at the Presidential Palace following their tete-a-tete this morning.

Attending the meeting on the Egyptian side were Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

The Palestinian delegation included Hani al-Hasan, a member of Fatah's Central Committee; Dr. Nabil Sha'th, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council; Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman, President 'Arafat's adviser; Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, the Palestinian president's media adviser; and Palestinian Ambassador to Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah.

Egypt: Palestinian Envoy Views Mubarak-'Arafat Talks

NC2902081296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2312 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian Ambassador to Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah announced that President Husni Mubarak's meeting with his brother Yasir 'Arafat at this particular time is within the context of constant consultations between the two presidents, especially in the wake of last Sunday's incidents in Jerusalem and Ashqelon and the subsequent Israeli decision to close the West Bank and Gaza indefinitely. He noted that this measure is bound to heighten tensions and worsen the already volatile atmosphere among Palestinian residents of these areas.

Al-Qidrah told MENA that President 'Arafat will brief President Mubarak on the talks he held yesterday with Israeli Army Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq.

Al-Qidrah reaffirmed that the Palestinian Authority rejects the pressures the Israeli Government exercises on it with the aim of driving a wedge between the Palestinian people and their nationalist leadership, headed by President 'Arafat. He declared that these pressures, in the final count, consutute an intervention in Palestinian affairs.

The Palestinian ambassador remarked that it is clear that the peace process at this time consists of bargaining and posturing between Israeli doves and hawks, each side trying to win the next general elections. He said they ignore the fact that violence only leads to further violence and that oppression and mass reprisals never create an appropriate climate for peace.

Zuhdi al-Qidrah noted that Presidents Mubarak and 'Arafat will discuss Israel's recent hints about postponing its withdrawal from Hebron, something that may provoke violent disturbances among Jews and Palestinians in the city.

He added that President 'Arafat will ask his brother President Mubarak to intercede without delay with the Israeli Government in order to prevent the situation in the occupied territories from deteriorating further, to halt the expansion of Israeli settlements, prevent further confiscation of land and the building of auxiliary roads, and to secure the release of Palestinian POW's and detainees.

Al-Qidrah denied the rumors about canceling the proposed Egyptian-Palestinian-Jordanian summit, saying that this is out of the question, but noting that some prior engagements had led to its postponement, including King Husayn's visits to the UK and the United States and the deteriorating conditions in the Palestinian territories.

He concluded his statement by praising Egypt's active and constructive role and thanking the Egyptian people and president for all they are doing to solve the current outstanding problems. Al-Qidrah said that Egypt represents the welcoming bosom that always listens to Palestinians worries and concerns.

He remarked: We have grown accustomed to such concern from President Mubarak.

Egypt: Paper on 'Arafat Claim of Israeli-Palestinian 'Conspiracy'

NC2902104496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0610 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Feb (MENA)—The newspapers AL-AHRAM and AL-AKHBAR note that establishing a just and permanent peace is the only way to isolate the forces of extremism and fanaticism from all the sides. Hesitation, attempts to apply pressure, the violation of any agreements that are reached, and the application of half-solutions reached on some tracks will only lead to greater violence and counterviolence.

In a comment in today's issue headlined "Peace and Stability in the Middle East," AL-AHRAM says recent incidents in Israel that claimed scores of lives and injured many people revealed that hesitating over the settlement process and stalling decisions on many issues are the major cause of the violence and counterviolence being suffered by Israel, the Palestinian areas, and the occupied border strip of southern Lebanon.

The paper says the political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict has reached a crucial turning point. Although there has been progress, continuing the march and finalizing the Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied by force represent the only guarantee of stability in the region. This is the only way to control the interaction of events in the region in a way that allows the people of the region to reap the tangible fruits of peace, particularly on the economic and security levels.

Under the headline "'Arafat's Accusations Require International Investigation," AL-AKHBAR warns in its editorial today of the danger behind an accusation made recently by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat that rightist elements in Israel are involved in the recent suicide attacks in Israel that killed or wounded many people. He claims these rightist elements helped plan these events. The newspaper asks the international community to take this accusation seriously and insist on investigating the claim under international supervision to reveal the extent of this vicious conspiracy. Such a conspiracy aims to restrain the current moves toward peace and to deal a final blow to the peace process, reverting to the atmosphere of hostility that prevailed in the region before peace started its march and realized progress on some fronts.

AL-AKHBAR notes that 'Arafat did not conceal his suspicions about a secret conspiracy between Israeli and Palestinian elements who are united over plans and interests that are threatened by the peace that is expected to be reached at the end of the march. So the two teams are uniting their efforts to hamper the peace process in any way, even if it means sacrificing a few innocent victims, be they Jews or Palestinians.

AL-AKHBAR adds that it is no secret that many extremist elements in Israel believe that giving back the occupied Palestinian land to its owners is dangerous and threatens the fate of their country. They also believe that any Israeli leader who supports the peace process is a traitor to his country and people.

The paper says that 'Arafat's accusation regarding a Palestinian-Israeli conspiracy to strike the peace movement should not be ruled out, particularly as it comes from someone who knows the Israeli methods used in the past to eliminate any attempt at restoring peace in the Middle East.

The newspaper concludes its editorial by saying that the Palestinian president's accusation of a conspiracy is based on many past experiences, be they of the Israeli side or some renegade Palestinian sides. We believe that extensive investigations should take place to reveal the truth of this claim so that the world can find out who the real culprit is.

Egypt: Britain Denies Granting Asylum to Muslim Leader al-Sirri

NC2802190796 Paris AFP in English 1825 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 28 (AFP) — The British Embassy in Cairo denied on Wednesday [28 February] reports that London had granted political asylum to the leader of an outlawed Muslim militant group.

"The reports are incorrect," an embassy spokesman who asked not to be named told AFP. The spokesman refused to confirm if Yasir Tawfik Ali al-Sirri, a leader in the Talaih al-Fatah, the military wing of Egypt's Jihad militant group, was residing in Britain.

Police sources told AFP last week that al-Sirri "has been given political asylum in Britain in the past few days," adding that he had been living there for the past two years after passing through Sudan and Yemen.

Al-Sirri was condemned to death in his absence in 1994 by an Egyptian military court after being found guilty of being involved in an abortive bid to kill former Prime Minister Atif Sidqi in 1993. He was also sentenced to 15 years' hard labour in November for setting up ties with the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

"The Egyptian security services have handed over to the British authorities a file containing all the information on Yasir Tawfik Ali al-Sirri, including the sentences against him," the police source added.

Cairo has accused Britain of becoming a refuge for armed fundamentalists seeking to topple the government of President Husni Mubarak.

Egypt: Al-Alfi—'Terrorist' Acts in Asyut 'Return to Violence'

NC2802170296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1535 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Feb (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi stressed that the terrorist incidents in the Asyut Governorate in Upper Egypt cannot be regarded as a phenomenon in any way whatsoever.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM HEBDO published today, he said that the situation in the Asyut Governorate could be described as a return to violence because a number of fugitive terrorist elements have fled from other areas to this governorate.

Asyut Governor Muhammad Raja'i al-Tahlawi rejected the view of some circles linking new terrorist attacks in Asyut to his firm policy. He said that similar incidents took place during the terms of previous governors of Asyut. He added that the recent wave of violence in his government is the terrorists' reaction to blows they suffered in the neighboring Governorate of Suhaj in the past two weeks and to the death of one of their leaders.

The Asyut governor said that the terrorists have chosen Asyut as the location for their recent operations because it is the sole governorate in which security forces have succeeded in establishing tranquility.

Egypt: Egyptian Jihad Group Leader Said Living in Bulgaria

MM2802144296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Muhammad Salah in Cairo: "Al-Zawahiri Is in Bulgaria, Did Not Travel to Switzerland!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Important new information emerged yesterday on the whereabouts of the leader of the Jihad Group in Egypt, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, who, some two years ago, was believed to have been granted political asylum in Switzerland and thought to be living in Geneva.

Reliable sources have revealed that al-Zawahiri is currently in Bulgaria, having arrived there during the second half of 1993, and that he has been moving clandestinely, for fear of being discovered and exposed to danger.

These sources have refused to reveal how the Jihad leader entered Bulgaria, and whether he is living there under his real or an assumed name. They have, however, confirmed that his situation does not contravene the country's existing laws. They also explained that the Jihad Group resorted to spreading false rumors about al-Zawahiri entering Switzerland and obtaining political asylum in order to divert attention there and enable him to make arrangements for himself in Bulgaria.

The Jihad Group's information office issued a statement on 6 November 1993 announcing that al-Zawahiri was in Switzerland and that he would hold a press conference in the Hotel Du Rhone in Geneva, inviting journalists, correspondents, and international news agencies. The statement said that, during the conference, the Jihad leader would make a speech under the title "The Challenges Faced by the Islamic Movement in Egypt," and that the Jihad would distribute to those present a book by al-Zawahiri called "the black book." However, one day before the date of the conference, the office issued another statement under the title "apology," saying that the Jihad leader apologizes for being unable to hold the conference "due to reports that the Egyptian Embassy in Switzerland intends to disrupt the conference" and also "in view of the weakness of the hotel's security measures," and promising to set another date for the conference.

The sources, which refused to reveal their identity, said that "this was a ruse in which the Jihad used the media to spread false rumors which, for many, shortly turned to certainty, and al-Zawahiri took advantage of the situation to make arrangements away from the publicity surrounding the religious groups' leaders in European states."

Egypt: Trials of Second Nuclear Reactor Start

NC2802141396 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 24 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by 'Adil Sabri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority has completed the building of a second experimental nuclear reactor. The authority began the first trials of the 22,000 kw reactor in Inshas in preparation for commercial use in June. It has been decided to use the reactor to produce radioactive isotopes used in medical equipment, machines used to search for petroleum in deep seas and land, and in heavy metals production. Special units will be produced to preserve food with nuclear radiation and to eliminate rodents and insects in rural areas with radiation.

The authority had earlier postponed completion of the project for three years for financial reasons. It is now training Egyptian technicians to operate and maintain the nuclear reactors in preparation for implementing the Egyptian program for generating electricity from nuclear plants.

Egypt: Israel's Quest To Control Energy Grid Viewed

NC2802130896 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 20 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by 'Adil Sabri: "Israel's Attempts To Control the Arab Electricity Linkage Project; Pressures on the European Union To Suspend Its Financing of the Project"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has submitted several protests through diplomatic channels to contest the Ministry of Electricity and Energy's refusal to include it in the electricity linkage project with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. Israel hopes to achieve political and economic goals by joining the project. It is used to taking the initiative in wartime, and now it is hard for it to see Arab States becoming part of a huge project for the first time with common economic interests apart from their political differences and without being the leading active participant.

Due to a purely Egyptian initiative, electric linkage among the eastern Arab states was launched. In 1986, Engineer Mahir Abazah, electricity and energy minister, suggested to Iraq and the Gulf states that they link their electricity grids with Egypt through Jordan. The idea developed into concrete technical studies in 1989. It gained political support from Syria, Turkey, and Jordan because of the improvement in inter-Arab relations before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The project received financial support from Arab and Islamic financial organizations because of its economic significance as the focal point for complete Arab integration. The Kuwaiti Fund for Economic Development extended $350 million in easy loans to the states involved. It also allocated many educational grants for final technical and economic studies. The Arab states agreed to link the 400,000-volt ultra-high and high voltage grids to allow them to transmit the largest possible volume of electric energy among the Arab states at different times, like the unified European grid.

The project saves each state from spending some $1 billion annually on electricity generation. In addition, it facilitates the purchase of energy from member states whenever the need arises.

Although the project's activity in Iraq was suspended after the invasion of Kuwait and until 1994, the Kuwaiti fund actually paid the necessary costs to link the grids in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq to prepare for the final implementation once the economic sanctions on Iraq are lifted. The states involved strengthened their grids on the borders to prepare them for high-volt linkage for the vital projects that go through these grids.

After beginning peaceful negotiations with the Palestinians and Jordan, Israel thought that it was high time for it to become an active member in the linkage project. It went too far in its high hopes when it sought to be the center of the linkage among the eastern Arab states and set up an energy stock exchange, especially since it knows that the project will later move eastward to Europe through Turkey and westward to Spain through Morocco.

Every now and then, Israel sends its poisonous messages through diplomatic channels and the international media to affirm that linking Egypt with Jordan through Elat will cost some $5 million, while the undersea cable that will link 'Aqabah and Taba will cost $45 million.

Israel sometimes contacts Egyptian journalists in order to persuade them to talk about the issue in a manner that shows Israel as eager to help the economic interest of the Egyptians, whether or not it is included in the linkage.

Egypt's opposition to the inclusion of Israel in the plan stemmed from resistance to Israeli's objective of bringing Egypt into a political dispute with Syria in case the linkage is made through Elat before the achievement of comprehensive peace in the region. This peace will enable all the parties to cooperate economically without any undue sensitivities. The studies also confirmed that the electricity grid in the Elat area does not allow for Israel's inclusion in the link because its grid consists of medium and low voltage cables that extend to Tel Aviv. Should the Arab linkage network pass through Elat, it would directly benefit Israel allowing it to save energy from other sources. It could then use the energy whenever it wants but would be unable to export energy to the member countries due to the weakness of its local network.

The Arab countries have also confirmed that there is a grave energy shortage inside Israel. The growth rate of its industrial projects is higher than the growth rate of the electricity projects in the Arab countries and Turkey. This means Israel would be in constant need of Arab energy and unable to export any surplus energy for at least 15 years. Israel tried to attract Egypt to the electricity link project through Rafah, in the Sinai, so that electricity would pass through Gaza and from it to Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and then to Jordan. Israel presented the project as a service to the Palestinians in Gaza but really wanted strong unified networks to pass deep into Israel to set up a regional center for selling and exchanging energy where decisions and prices would be controlled by Tel Aviv. Israel also wants to develop its weak network of 220.66 kw [figure as published]. If the project goes through Israel, it would save its annual investment of $4.5 billion in electricity plants and spend it on more vital projects. If the project is carried out, it will also ensure the flow of Arab oil from the Gulf, Iraq, and Algeria in the west through the electricity grid to Israel's factories.

Egypt's position on Israel was decisive because Egypt realized the economic and political implications of repeated Israeli protests. Israel is presently trying to pressure Egypt psychologically by announcing the implementation of the electricity linkage with Jordan through the West Bank in order to bypass Egyptian-Syrian rejection of Israel's objectives. We can ignore this pressure if we know that Israel will not implement a strong grid that serves the West Bank because it knows that it will leave the grid to the Palestinians sooner or later. Jordan is also facing a grave energy shortage, and this makes it the primary beneficiary of the linkage project. This means that it will be committed to the collective Arab agreement. Additionally, the more than 40 year old network linking Jordan to the West Bank needs complete replacement. When Israel learned that the European countries were assisting with the electricity linkage project, which will reach Europe in early 1998, it started to exert pressure to stop financial and technical aid, especially from France, Italy, and Spain.

The current situation requires a confrontation of the Israeli pressure on Europe, especially as Europe is presently closing down nuclear and coal-fired generating plants and looking for clean alternative energy sources. Arab oil would be easy to export as electricity through the linkage network. Additionally, there is the possibility of generating 50 billion kw of clean hydroelectricity from Nile sources in Africa by the second decade of the 21st century. The countries' needs will not exceed 30 percent of the generated energy, and therefore, the surplus clean energy will be exported to the European countries.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Says Palestinians 'Forced To Use Violence'

LD2802134596 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother leader of the revolution [al- Qadhdhafi] has given a statement to JANA on the twin bombing of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In the statement he said: The Israelis who killed 'Ayyash and al-Shaqaqi and others are the ones responsible for the policy of violence in occupied Palestine. They are the ones who are occupying the lands of another, and are killing him who seeks to liberate his land, home, and family. They consider him a terrorist. The Zionist policy is responsible for the massacres of Jerusalem, Ashkelon, and others, past and future. Any other logic would turn the facts upside down and enter the realm of the absurd [lama'qul].

The Palestinians have been forced to use violence as a reaction to the Zionist violence against them and to defend their survival. Weeping for the Israelis and not crying for the Palestinians, condemning the Palestinians and defending the Israelis, signify two things. These are: The world is hypocritical and the Palestinian side is the weak one.

Libya: JANA Editor Criticizes U.S. Statements on Farrakhan Visit

LD2802222996 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1925 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 28 Feb (JANA) — The U.S. White House spokesman said that the U.S. Justice Department is to investigate the visit by Louis Farrakhan, the U.S. leader of the Nation of Islam, to several African and Asian countries and the promises he was given about aid by some of the countries he visited.

The U.S. spokesman said that the countries visited by Louis Farrakhan support terrorism and the leaders with whom he had met were despots.

The international editor of the JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY commented on the statement made by the U.S. White House, saying that the best answer to the allegations reiterated by the spokesman was what Farrakhan himself said at his meeting with tens of thousands of black people in Chicago following his return from his recent visit. He said: I defy the U.S. Government and Congress to investigate this with me, for I would reveal then that a number of the members of the U.S. Senate were agents of the Israeli Knesset.

The U.S. Government was trying to deprive the black citizens of aid granted to them by their brothers. He said that in case of receipt of the aid, the black people would invest it in building houses and factories.

He said that they would clean up the squalor created by the U.S. Government.

The international editor said that during Farrakhan's meeting with the black people in the United States, he had cast doubts on the priorities of U.S. foreign policy. He said that the United States gave $6 billion of the U.S. people's money to Israelis every year. He questioned that by saying: How could one describe those who gave this money out of the U.S. people's livelihood, the people who paid high tax? They who give the money are the agents of those who received it.

The JANA international affairs editor pointed out that the real reason for the storm raised by the U.S. Administration about Farrakhan's tour is the defense by the leader of the Nation of Islam in America of the Great Jamahiriyah and its clear principled attitudes, and Farrakhan's high appreciation for the pioneering role of the brother leader of the revolution in bolstering Islam and Muslims, his exposure of the hostile American strategy against the Jamahiriyah, his affirmation that the two Libyan citizens suspected of being involved in the so-called Lockerbie issue are innocent, and his description of the Western and American accusations against the two as being false and invalid. The editor quoted what Farrakhan had said in this connection when he said that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi is a revolutionary and a friend and a brother, and that the Jamahiriyah supports the struggle against the imperialists and the colonialists and backs all the oppressed peoples everywhere in the world.

The editor asked: What does the U.S. White House spokesman mean by those he called the despots that Louis Farrakhan had met? Did he mean Nelson Mandela, who waged a just struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa and realized freedom for his people and triumphed over the forces of racialism and despotism? The editor said that if the struggle for freedom is a despotic act, then this is a great honor for all honorable strugglers. The editor said that the White House spokesman's description of the leaders of a number of countries in this way is a violation of international usage, an insult to the peoples of the world, and flagrant interference in their political choices. The editor added: Who has given the U.S. Administration the right to classify states as it wishes and label their leaders by unacceptable and inappropriate descriptions? The JANA international affairs editor concluded his comment by asking: Who is the savage and the despot? Is he the one who deploys fleets and weapons and threatens to use force to intimidate peaceful nations and destabilize their security, or is he the one who struggles for the liberty of his people and establishes peace and security in the world? The difference is quite clear to see for anyone who has foresightedness.

Libya: JANA Editor Assails 'Stupid' U.S. Measures Against Cuba

LD2802133696 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1230 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tripoli, 28 Feb — The American president has announced a number of anti-Cuban measures, including the boosting of the transmission of the anti-Cuban radio "Marti" and the suspension of all private air flights to Cuba.

The international editor of the Jamahiriyah News Agency [JANA] commented on this development saying: Such measures fall within the framework of the American aggressive behavior against peoples rejecting American hegemony. They are also a flagrant meddling in the international affairs of peoples and their choices and an attempt to harm their security and stability.

However, such measures are nothing but stupid and illogical ones. It seems that they were forced on the American president by imperialist institutions to damage him politically and remove him. [passage omitted]

JANA's international affairs editor concluded his comment saying: Such irresponsible U.S. policies will not terrorize peoples. Rather, they will make them more determined to continue their opposition to American arrogance everywhere in the world. Victory will surely be for those peoples which have been struggling for their freedom in their lands, he reiterated.

Libya: Paper Denies Western Claims Regarding Chemical Weapons

LD2802174496 Tripoli JANA in English 1456 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, Al-Nawar [February] 28 (JANA) — In today's edition AL-SHAMS newspaper denied the claims of some hostile media and what has been propagated about libya's project aimed at producing chemical weapons.

The newspaper has once again drawn attention to the lies and fabricated allegations which have been propagated by the same hostile media about the Rabta Factory for Pharmaceutical Materials, which have already been proved false by well-established facts and the testimonies of many Arab ministries of health as well as representatives of Arab and international medical companies, who attended the opening of the factory.

The article said that some hostile media have surprised us with claims and fabricated allegations, stating that Libya has a project to produce chemical weapons. This is nothing other than a fabrication and a false claim which reminds us of those lies and fabricated allegations which have been propagated by the same hostile media about the Rabta Factory for Pharmaceutical Materials. Those lies which have been proved wrong and fall down before the concrete facts were the evidence with which the whole world was assured that the Rabta factory was nothing more than a factory for pharmaceutical products and not for chemical weapons as was falsely claimed by the enemies of the good of the people.

All those who were present during the opening of the factory on September 20, 1995 which coincided with the celebrations of the 26th anniversary of the Great Al Fateh Revolution. Those who were present included many Arab health ministers, presidents and representatives of international and Arab medical companies as well as heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Libya in addition to many international media correspondents. These people all witnessed that this great medical achievement is in the interests of the human race and for alleviating suffering and was not build for aggression or destruction. The lies of the hostile media became clear to all when the guests received samples of pharmaceutical production and as well as being given an insight into treaties and signed contracts with many of the international and Arab pharmaceutical companies which were willing to buy the factory's products.

We know and the world is not ignorant that these fabricated lies and allegations which have been propagated from time to time are part of the hostile activities, propaganda and psychological warfare against Libya. it represents a deliberate cover for Israel's arsenal of chemical weapons and has exposed attempts to divert attention from the latest scandals which the United States has perpetrated to restore its weapons and chemical bombs in different areas in the world.

Propagation of these allegations at this time in particular in which our Libyan Arab people are preparing to celebrate the 19th anniversary to declare people's authority and the birth of the first Jamahiriyah in history is but a cheap and dirty attempt to drag down our people and disfigure their bright image in the eyes of the world.

The Libyan people who embodied the ambitions of humanity in achieving their eternal dream in possession of its arms wealth and authority and produced the great Green Document for Human Rights in the Age of the Masses, will never be stopped by such claims and misleading fabrications, whose identity and aims have been exposed, from building a happy and free society.

Libya: Border Guards Wound 3 Egyptians After Goods Confiscated

NC2802163396 Paris AFP in English 1552 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Sallum, Egypt-Libya border, Feb 28 (AFP)—Libyan border guards injured three Egyptians protesting after customs officers confiscated goods from a coach party of 56 people on Wednesday [28 February], Egyptian police said.

The row broke out after the customs officers seized all the goods carried by the bus passengers, including electrical goods, police at al-Sallum said.

"The Libyan security services unleashed their police dogs on the Egyptian passengers and beat them up after they tried to attack the Libyan customs post," one officer said, adding that three passengers were taken to hospital in al-Sallum.

Egyptian police, accusing the Libyans of seizing the goods for their own use, said the customs officers refused to give the passengers receipts as proof of the confiscations.

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Bashir Pledges Readiness To Cooperate With UN

EA2902083396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Umar al-Bashir has affirmed Sudan's total readiness to cooperate with the United Nations regarding the three suspects in the attempt to assassinate the president of the Egyptian regime.

He made the remarks during a meeting with the UN special envoy currently visiting the country with the aim of acquainting himself with the steps taken by the government regarding the three suspects alleged to be in Sudan.

The president briefed the envoy on the government's efforts in this regard and referred to the establishment of a special committee to follow up the matter. He said Sudan's beliefs and traditions prevented it from fostering so-called terrorism.

On his part, the UN secretary general's envoy said he would convey the outcome of his visit to Sudan to the UN secretary general. He described his visit as beneficial saying that he had met a number of government officials who briefed him on the government's efforts regarding the suspects.

Tunisia

Tunisia: Opposition Leader Sentenced to 11 Years Imprisonment

LD2902110096 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The criminal court in Tunis delivered its verdict during the night: a heavy sentence of 11 years imprisonment was given to the main opposition leader, Mohamed Moaada, the president of the Movement of Socialist Democrats. Assan Diop reports:

[Diop] Yes, the trial went smoothly, although not in ideal circumstances, as one of Mohamed Moaada's lawyers reacted afterward and as shown by the late hour at which the sentence was pronounced — during the night, at two o'clock in the morning [0100 GMT], practically in secret, in the absence of the 30 defense lawyers and observers there to follow proceedings. These sentences, which amount to 11 years imprisonment and are to run consecutively, were handed down to the leader of the Tunisian Movement of Socialist Democrats by four judges. It is a harsh sentence. Mohamed Moaada can appeal, but according to the defense, there is little chance of having the verdict overturned. The verdict was labelled severe by some lawyers who consider that it has completely ruined Moaada's political career. The defense pointed to the lack of evidence and vainly requested a dismissal of the case for their client.

Moaada was accused of having entertained links with foreign agents, in particular Libyans, links that were likely to leave some Tunisians vulnerable to reprisals. The court also accused the opposition leader of having accepted money from Libya in contravention of the 25th article of the Tunisian law governing political parties. In any case, this trial threatens to further undermine the political position of the regime of President Zine Ben Ali.

Tunisia: Regime Condemns Suicide Bombers' Attacks in Israel

LD2802142796 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In reply to a question on Tunisia's reaction to the two explosions in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, an official source at the Foreign Ministry expressed regret about the repetition of such operations. The source said that such operations claim innocent human lives at a time when Palestinians and Israelis are achieving continuous progress in consolidating peace in the self-rule areas and are continuing their efforts for a just solution to the Palestinian issue, within the framework of the international efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive and durable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The source added: Tunisia — which has always adopted a principled and firm stance against terrorism in all forms — can only condemn those acts and address a call to the international community so as the latter combines its efforts in order to face with decisiveness the terrorist policies and operations anywhere in the world.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Foreign Minister Confers With Russia's Posuvalyuk

JN2902100996 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1110 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain, 28 Feb (WAKH)—Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah today met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk, who is currently visiting Bahrain.

The two sides reviewed a number of issues of mutual concern, as well as the development and promotion of friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation. They also reviewed the situation in the Arab Gulf region, the Middle East peace process, and other international issues.

The meeting was attended by Ghazi Muhammad al-Qusaybi, Foreign Ministry undersecretary; Muhammad Muzaffar, Bahraini ambassador to the Russian Federation; and Alexsandr Novozhilov [name as received], Russian ambassador to Bahrain.

Bahrain: Russia's Posuvalyuk Voices Support for Security Measures

JN2902101596 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1120 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 28 Feb (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, received a message from Viktor Chernomyrdin, prime minister of the Russian Federation, on the strong friendly bilateral relations and ways to strengthen joint cooperation in various fields.

The message was conveyed when his highness received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk and his delegation this morning.

The Russian official expressed his government's support for the measures Bahrain has adopted to preserve its security and stability. Talks also dealt with a number of regional and international issues of joint interest. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Qatar: Qatar To Ask For Extradition of Failed Coup Plotters

NC2902112796 Paris AFP in English 1036 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Feb 29 (AFP)—Qatar is to ask Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to extradite a dozen people implicated in a failed coup in Doha two weeks ago, an official told AFP on Thursday [29 February].

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the country's former commerce minister, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Hamad Al Thani, who is currently living in Abu Dhabi, was among those whose extradition would be requested.

Qatar has accused the former amir, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, now living in Abu Dhabi, of organizing the coup attempt. He was deposed by his son in June last year.

Political sources in Doha said some of those involved in the failed coup attempt had fled to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia

CDLR Issues Bulletin No. 86

MS2802112196 London CDLR Monitor in English 9 Feb 96

[Bulletin No. 86 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia, CDLR — received via Internet 28 February]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] News —

The Detention of Hasan al-Saray

News agencies and a number of newspapers issued various reports of the extradition of a Saudi national by the Pakistani authorities to Saudi Arabia. The inaccurate spelling of the man's name was later corrected to Hasan As-Surayhi. The reports said that the extradition was a result of government claims connecting As-Surayhi to the Riyadh explosion. People were led to believe from this that the authorities had reached satisfactory conclusions regarding the identities of the perpetrators of the explosion.

As soon as the Committee became informed of this news, we began an investigation which found that the man's full name was indeed Hasan As-Surayhi, but that the request from the Saudi authorities for Pakistan to extradite him had actually no connection with developments in the Riyadh investigation.

The extradition was, in fact, in connection with the policy adopted by the Saudi regime to arrest anyone that has a vague relationship with the Jihad in Afghanistan, even having only passed through the country. Every detainee is interrogated for information regarding colleagues and friends in Pakistan.

As a result, many names have been mentioned, including that of Hassan As-Surayhi. This is the real reason for his arrest.

It is fully expected that the Saudi regime will request the Pakistani authorities to extradite all remaining Saudi nationals still residing in Peshawar, even though the actual number is very small.

Our information about Hasan As-Surayhi is that he had been fully engaged in preaching and teaching activities for the previous four years and had no connection to any Jihad groups. He joined the Hadith group which enjoys good relations with the Saudi authorities and the official scholars, and married the daughter of the head of that group. As-Surayhi was also in business in the honey trade, but was not involved in any way with any armed groups. In fact, those who adopted the "fighting" viewpoint consider As-Surayhi to be one who has left the path of Jihad. People who know him well insist that the story of his participation in the Riyadh incident is a "fairy" story.

Information received of developments in the investigation of the Riyadh explosion confirms that the authorities are still unable to find any clues or leads. For this reason, the exaggeration in the media of As-Surayhi hand-over is an attempt to reduce the acute embarrassment of the regime after several months of fruitless investigation. The regime was caused further embarrassment when the American authorities informed their nationals of the need to stay fully alert and to take great care whilst in the Kingdom, which in effect directly hinted that there was a definite lack of confidence on the part of the Americans in the Saudi security arrangements.

Due to the many doubts of the western media regarding the news of As-Surayhi extradition, the reporting of the news was afforded no great significance — totally in contrast to the exaggerations printed in the Arabic press sponsored by the Saudi regime.

Meanwhile, the detention campaign against those with any connection to Pakistan, and also against those who have been detained before for any type of Islamic activity, still continues unabated. A large number of people still suffer from torture used in an effort to force confessions of participation in the Riyadh explosion. Non-Saudi detainees face some of the worst methods of torture. Methods employed include bringing wives to the place of detention under threat of being raped in front of their husbands and other humiliations. All of this occurs in spite of the lack of any concrete evidence against the detainees.

The only sensible deduction reached so far by American investigators is that the actual bombing was planned and executed by an internal group, and was not the work of an outside, foreign party.

The Latest Royal Feuds

Internal relations and the situation within the royal family are in continual decline, despite ostentatious appearances to the contrary. Those knowledgeable of the internal affairs of the royal family remark that trust between the feuding parties has reached its lowest point to date. Information confirms that Sultan is still desperate, whatever the price, to ascend the throne. His latest efforts include attempting to bribe national guard officers in order to win their loyalty in his favour. Unfortunately for Sultan, the officers in question decided to inform their superiors of his proposals.

A plan to assassinate a close aide of 'Abd-al-Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz was believed to be the work of Salman. Such a move would seem to imply that Salman is more intelligent than Sultan, who tends towards hasty and reckless actions. Salman, however, pretends to support 'Abd-al whilst at the same time attempting to remove one of his closest aides.

Family meetings are particularly gloomy and depressing and are accompanied with a great deal of distrust and suspicion.

These suspicions are such, that some family members have arranged with their aides to follow up the meetings in order to avoid being forced into embarrassing situations, or into accepting decisions they do not agree with. Moreover, the absence from these meetings of the most charismatic personality in the family, the late Muhammed Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, has meant that other figures have begun to raise their heads and enter the race for power.

Mish'al Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz has restated his wish to be crown prince, he is senior to Sultan. In the past, Mish'al has kept silent in exchange for a few billion every year. Even more surprising, however, is the appearance of Talal Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz who is also requesting the position of crown prince.

The Sudayis used to utilise the "race" card to keep brothers such as Mish'al and Talal in line, as their mothers were not of Arab origin. However, this card no longer appears to be quite so effective. Yet another battle, involving aAbd-al-Rahman Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz and Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, has begun for the position of second deputy.

American sources have indicated that feuds within the royal family reached a critical phase last week which actually involved the call-up of several military units. No details, however, have yet become known as to the true picture behind these manoeuvres.

This family feuding was also apparent in the decision to appoint a new finance minister. The Sudayris were successful in having the decision of the appointment issued in the name of King Fahd, despite the insistence of Abdullah's that it should be issued in his name, to give the impression that 'Adullah was acting directly as King, and not merely as regent.

espite a slight improvement in King Fahd's general health, his mental performance has greatly deteriorated and doctors have confirmed that his mental ability will continue to decline even further. Fahd's sons, particularly 'Abd-al-'Aziz and Saud, hold Nayif and Sultan responsible for their father's illness, as they were the ones who forced Fahd to detain the sheikhs, preachers and responsible citizens. They obviously believe, therefore, that Fahd's illness is a punishment from God but that the punishment should be directed at Nayif and Sultan, not their father.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that the present situation within the royal family is one of disarray and the structure of the family appears to be incapable of dealing with such problems.

This will inevitably lead to further confrontation between the different parties.

Salman Kills with his Bare Hands

An accountant for Saudia airlines has died as a result of injuries caused by a severe beating at the hands of Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. The incident occurred after Salman requested the airline's administration to send an accountant to discuss his accumulated debts, which amount to hundreds of millions of riyals. Salman resorted to this request because of the airlines reluctance to issue an order to allow one of his cronies to use the airline, their reluctance being a direct result of these huge debts. When the airline administration was made aware of Salman's request, a Saudia accountant was assigned the task. He worked continuously for three days and nights in order to prepare an impressive schedule for the prince's debts, all in the belief that the prince would appreciate his efforts and would then save the airline from disaster by settling his debts without delay. Unfortunately, upon finishing his presentation, the accountant was savagely attacked by Salman, who subjected him to a severe and merciless beating until he lost consciousness. The accountant was then taken to his home where he died three days later.

It was mistakenly believed that Salman, as he had become older, had managed to break his old habit of beating and whipping people. It would now appear that his old self is manifesting itself once again.

More Transfers and Sackings

The administration for universities received new directions from the interior ministry to proceed with new transfers in order to negate the positive influence of several respectable figures. These directives extended to the Science Academy's administration in Al Imam University. Instructions were issued to change the positions of the principals of Ash-Shifa Academy, Ar-Riyadh Academy and Al Dilam Academy to administrative positions.

Sheykh Muhammed al-Muhaysini was prevented from continuing as the Imam of his mosque as a result of his huge popularity and his prayers against injustice and oppressors.

Five Years Is Not Enough

Under directions from the interior ministry, appeal judges revoked a sentence issued by the High court of Riyadh against those charged with the Obailan case, in favour of stiffer sentences. The judges of the High Court of Riyadh refused to accept the appeal courts decision. The case was then transferred to another group of judges who accepted the request of the appeal judges for longer sentences so the original was increased to ten years. The judges who issued the increased sentence were Ad-Dahash, als-Subayh and al- Furayyan.

Clarification

Some of our supporters misunderstood the news reported by London radio and AL SHARQ AL AWSAT newspaper a few days ago with regard to the refusal of al-Mass'ari's request for an appeal.

In point of fact, the refusal was concerned with a request for an adjournment of the appeal to a date after 22/2/96. Whilst refusing this request for an adjournment however, the judge did grant the request that all Home Office communications with Dominica should be released to al-Mass'ari's lawyers in order to determine whether any deals were made with Dominica over al-Mass'ari.

We would therefore like to comfort our concerned supporters that the case is proceeding in the best interests of the Committee and the chances of winning the case are extremely favourable.

Traffic Fines

The interior ministry renewed its orders to traffic police that each squad must collect target revenues of at least fifteen thousand riyals per month.

Council Taxes

Various councils in the Kingdom have implemented a new tax on commercial premises, with the tax estimated according to the size of the property. The range of the tax is between 2,000 and 10,000 riyals per month.

Arrests: A Never Ending Story

Ar-Ruwais prison in Jeddah was transformed into a huge detention centre with the prison predominantly occupied by Islamists.

Amongst the new prisoners added to the list are : 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Graygir; 'Abd-al-Alim 'al-Uthman; Fahd Al Kunain; Bilal Al Harbi; Samir Al Jahdal; Sulayman Ash-Shu'aibi and 'Abid al-Nassafi. In addition was the arrest of Muhammed Aish Subhi followed by his wife and five children, the youngest of which is under two years of age. Ahmad Al Mastawi, who is paralysed, is also still in detention.

In Abha, the young man 'Ali Bin-Sayyid Al Ghamidi was arrested in the examination hall whist sitting his exams. 'Abd-al-Mun'im al- Ghamidi and Ahmad Salah al-Ghamidi were arrested in al-Baha. In al- Dammam, Hamid al-Ghamidi was arrested. Others detained include Muhammed Saad al-Osfoor; Ibrahim al-Hissaan; Muhammed An-Nugairishy; 'Aziz al-Ammari and his father; Muhammed Aish al-Harbi; Mahir al- Qurashi; Saad al-Guais and Hamid al-Owais. Most recently, a number of Imams were arrested, amongst them being Sheykh Ahmad al-Rasini in al-Qasim.

The Hospital Fire and The Fire Brigade

The fire incident at Alawi -Tunisi Hospital in Mecca highlighted the deterioration of the fire service and the poor level of preparation for dealing with incidents of fire. All the apparatus necessary to save lives was inexcusably out of order. Mobile ladders were out of action and air bags were not operational. The accident resulted in over fifty deaths, in total contradiction to official figures released by the authorities. The accident was considered to be a disaster from all aspects, from the lack of compliance with safety regulations by the hospital administration, the delayed and ineffective response of the fire brigade and the lack of actual preparation by the fire brigade of manpower and equipment. The whole incident was considered to be an " Act of God" and hence no investigation will follow as to who is responsible for the disaster.

Like Father Like Son

After Dr. al-Jamjum's appointment as manger of the King Fahd Hospital in Al Baha, he successfully exposed the misappropriation of huge sums of money and the poor standard of performance at the hospital. As a result, the doctor began to investigate those responsible in order to uncover further information. To his astonishment, a gang raided his house and drugged him and his wife in their bedroom. When they regained consciousness, they found numerous knives thrown around the room in a "mafia-style" threat from the manager of the company running the hospital. It is owned by one of Nayef's sons.

When Dr. al-Jamjum reported the incident, he was accused of hallucinating and no further action was taken.

An Answer To A Rumour

It was rumoured that ASH-SHAR'IYYAH magazine listed the name of Sheykh 'Abd-al-Ibn Qa'ud amongst the names of those in receipt of cheques from the custodian of the two Sacred Mosques in return for their efforts in pronouncing fatwas in justification for the crimes of the regime. The Committee confirms that this is only a rumour and that the Committee is fully aware that the Sheykh made his stand clear, and in public, against one of those in receipt of such cheques.

Apology

Due to the importance of this week's news, the second part in the series "Introduction to the Future Agenda" will be published next week.

Iraq: INA Reports Date of Next Round of Oil-for-Food Talks

JN2802133796 Baghdad INA in English 1115 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, Feb 28, INA — It was announced here officially that the second round of the dialogue between Iraq and the U.N. on oil for food and other humanitarian needs will be held on the 11th of next March. The U.N. Official Spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said that the dialogue will be held in the U.N. Headquarters in New York.

Iraq: Paper Says Clashes in Tikrit 'Confirmed'

MM2802134996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Calm Returns To Baghdad; Clashes in Tikrit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, London, AL-HAYAH — Western sources concerned with the Iraqi issue have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that "clashes" took place in Tikrit yesterday, adding that Baghdad was calm.

Other sources said that forces belonging to the special security organ headed by Qusayy, the Iraqi president's [youngest] son, continue to arrest members of Albu-Ghaffar family, to which Husayn Kamil, the president's son-in-law, belongs.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi figure has told AL-HAYAH that Husayn Kamil had confirmed to him that he supplied the Americans and Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN committee entrusted with dismantling Iraqi weapons, with "a lot of information" and that he deposited money in foreign banks.

Informed Iraqi sources pointed out to AL-HAYAH that the clashes in Tikrit resulted from the resistance put up by members of al-Majid family against the special security forces dispatched by Qusayy, President Saddam Husayn's son, to arrest them as part of a campaign designed to eliminate all those affiliated with Husayn Kamil, who was executed [as published] with others last Friday in a house in al-Sayyidiyah district, south of Baghdad. The sources said that the reason for the order issued by the Iraqi president last Monday to put all relatives and members of his clan — except his two sons, Qusayy and 'Udayy, and his cousins, 'Ali and 'Abd-Hasan-al-Majid — under tight security was to enable Qusayy to complete the task of arresting the "suspects" from Husayn Kamil's family and to prevent relatives from intervening, for fear of complications. [passage omitted]

Sabah Salman, former press and information adviser to President Saddam Husayn, told AL-HAYAH that Husayn Kamil had told him that he supplied the Americans and the UN committee entrusted with dismantling Iraqi mass-destruction weapons with a lot of information about the Iraqi nuclear and chemical armament programs after his defection to Amman last summer.

Asked about the "secrets" revealed to him by Husayn Kamil in Amman, Sabah Salman said that he had never allowed him to see the Iraqi president's daughters, Raghd and Rana. "I told him once that Baghdad was accusing him of stealing money, and he replied: I had no money abroad before I came to Jordan. I spoke to him another time about the need to invest his money in enterprises, so he admitted that he had money in banks and that he was making profit. He spoke a lot about Qusayy and 'Udayy. He begrudged them, especially Qusayy. I was surprised by that." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Senior Officials Reportedly Consider Fleeing

JN2802145496 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior officials and commanders in security circles, the Military Industrialization Organization, and the Ministry of Defense have been experiencing a state of tension and confusion since fighting broke out between the despot [Saddam Husayn] and his son 'Udayy, on one hand, and the supporters of Husayn Kamil, on the other.

Our sources have said that many officials who supported Saddam's two sons-in-law are now looking for ways to flee Iraq. The sources asserted that the arrest of Ziyad, the son of [Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister] Tariq 'Aziz, for attempting to assassinate Latif Nusayyif Jasim has increased the level of fear among the ruling family's henchmen. Moreover, there is growing concern among the henchmen over their future, which is threatened by the despot's readiness to murder his closest relatives, as well as by the fact that the arrogant powers have relinquished Saddam and that the mission of the 'Aflaqi [Ba'th] Party in the region has ended.

Recent reports on 27 February said the despot arrested a number of senior commanders and officials in the Ba'th party and ministries. The despot also made rapid transfers among officials, including persons suspected of having links to the despot's two sons-in-law.

Iraq: Opposition Says 'Fierce Clashes' Still Raging in Baghdad

NC2802161796 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation [IBC] has said that violence in central Iraq, especially in Baghdad and Tikrit, is still continuing. It said fierce clashes took place in al-Bayya', on the al-Karkh side of Baghdad. Saddamite forces, especially from the Special Security troops led by Qusayy Saddam Husayn, the younger son of the head of the Iraqi regime, and the Emergency Forces surrounded the region and arrested many citizens, especially high-ranking officers. The sound of artillery and mortar fire was also heard.

The IBC said the Special Security forces are still besieging al-'Awja in Tikrit for the third day running. In fierce clashes yesterday morning, many people were killed on both sides.

Also according to IBC, Saddam Husayn, fearing further repercussions, has ordered that all his relatives be detained and placed under strict guard. These include his maternal uncles, his sisters, and those whose loyalty he suspects. This excludes his sons 'Udayy and Qusayy, his cousin 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, and his brother ('Amir) Hasan al-Majid.

Iraq: Opposition Sources Say Saddam's Daughter Under House Arrest

BR2802163296 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1224 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Unattributed report: "Saddam Husayn's Daughter Under House Arrest"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, 28 Feb (EFE) — Saddam Husayn's youngest daughter, Rana, has been placed under house arrest by order of her father who accuses her of having known in advance the intention of her husband, Saddam, to desert to Jordan along with his brother, General Husayn Kamil.

This is what was reported to EFE today, Wednesday 28 February, by the spokesman of the National Iraqi Accord [ANI] opposition group which, a few days ago, was given permission by the Jordanian authorities to open an office in Amman.

Our source had no news of the Iraqi president's other daughter, Raghad, who also returned to Baghdad last week with her husband, General Husayn Kamil, after half a year in exile in Jordan.

Both women were forced to divorce their husbands just hours before they were killed on Friday night [23 February] by members of their al-Majid clan. Sources in the opposition and abroad claim that the murders were carried out on the orders of Saddam Husayn.

The ANI spokesman said that "dramatic changes" are about to happen in Baghdad over the next few days and said that they were still trying to confirm whether or not there had been a gunfight in the Iraqi presidential palace after the assassination of Saddam's son-in-laws, as other opposition sources have claimed.

EFE's source said: "People living in the vicinity of the presidential palace have told us that they heard an exchange of gunfire in the area on Sunday [25 February] but were unable to tell us what had occurred."

"We are sure that there has been a bloody split in the al-Majid family" to which the Kamel brothers and the Iraqi president belong. [passage omitted]

The ANI spokesman said: "Major Ezedin Muhamad Hasan al-Majid [names as received] refused to return to Baghdad with General Kamil and went to Turkey last Wednesday, the day after the deserters returned to Iraq, but he has not come back to Jordan."

He added: "While he was in Jordan, Major Ezedin devoted himself to business affairs and travelled extensively around the region."

The ANI source, who asked to remain anonymous, stated that the death of General Kamil's two brothers was more or less certain but "we still do not know the fate of his sons or those of his brother Saddam."

Other opposition sources said on Monday that one son of each had also been assassinated.

Iraq: 'Chaos' Reported Among Iraqi IV Army Corps Units

JN2802202896 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1850 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] After the Amir of the Faithful operations began, and following the landslide victory achieved by the mujahidin of the triumphant Badr Army Corps in the first phase of operations—which targeted the headquarters of the Saddamist IV Army Corps—our sources said that a state of chaos prevails among the units of this Army corps.

Our sources also asserted that the rate of desertion increased among the troops in the past two days. They added that the headquarters of this Saddamist Army Corps, which lies near the district of Qal'at Salih, witnessed intensive presence of officials and commanders from the Defense Ministry of the despot [Saddam Husayn]. These officials managed to enter the headquarters under strict security measures reinforced with armored vehicles.

Citing the impressions of the al-'Amarah Governorate residents, the sources said that many chieftains and dignitaries told the mujahidin that they were ready to participate in the coming phases of the Amir of the Faithful operations, and that they firmly intend to overthrow the regime side by side with the rifles of the valiant mujahidin.

Moreover, and in harmony with the current militant escalation in the rebellious south, a group of Ba'qubah residents executed criminal As'ad 'Aziz al-Duri, an element in the 'Aflaqite [Ba'th] Party in the Diyala Governorate. Our sources said that the body of this criminal was found in the Diyala River two days after he was kidnapped and after God's fair verdict was issued against him for his known dirty actions in terms of chasing the mujahidin and refusing to heed their warnings.

Iraq: Islamic Radio Views Repercussions of Husayn Kamil's Death

NC2802163096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Unattributed "Political Talk"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports say that the regime has liquidated the remaining members of Husayn Kamil's family. The regime killed Kamil's two sisters, the husband of one of them, and their children. This new massacre is another condemnation of the regime, which has exceeded all limits. This new violation also shows that the regime is not tackling the conditions in the country but seeking to export its crimes, expand their scope, and hit other targets as a way of perpetuating terrorism and poisoning the climate in order to terrify its henchmen and deter them from thinking of embarking on any similar adventure.

There is nothing unusual in the killing Husayn Kamil's two sisters. This type of crime has been the policy of this regime in dealing with its opponents from the beginning. Husayn Kamil was Saddam's right hand man in these crimes and one of the regime's pillars. Hence, what is now happening to his family reflects what he himself used to do against the sons of the resisting and steadfast Iraqi people.

The case of Husayn Kamil and the repercussions and consequences of this incident show that the issue was not meant solely for the Iraqi masses but also as a warning that those who have collaborated with the regime in its crimes could face the same fate they have planned for our people. It is said that criminal Fadil al-Barraj devised a new method for executing those among our people's sons who oppose them, a method of extreme torture and pain. Tyrant Saddam made him the first victim of the device this criminal devised to torture our sons.

The Husayn Kamil case also indicates that the battle has spread within the ruling family and that the repercussions will not stop with this assassination and the liquidation of the Husayn Kamil family and those close to him. It could spread to all the parties in the decision-making circle. All of them will feel the gravity of the situation. They will be gripped by panic and despair, and this inevitably will cause reactions and conflicts that will only make the situation worse and increase the chances of fights within the family. This in turn will hasten this regime's collapse. Our people are waiting to strike to hasten this end, which is wanted by all parties and circles.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil's Draft Charter on Country's Future Published

JN2802115196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 28 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Sirin Halasah]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Shortly after his defection to Jordan in August of last year, Husayn Kamil called on the Iraqi opposition to meet with him to discuss a draft charter for the future of Iraq in a post-Saddam era.

The 38-page document, which he wrote during his six-month exile in Jordan called for a change in Iraq based on democracy, pluralism, and freedom. It strongly condemned the current regime, describing it as a single-handed dictatorship.

He clearly wanted the opposition to meet with him to discuss the draft. He believed it could be used as a basis for a new political life in Iraq.

He blatantly accused the current regime of causing horrors and leading Iraq to its current situation. He wrote that Iraq had been dragged into war too often; that its people have suffered for too long, and that it was high time for change.

He wrote he believed that change could come through, "first, organising the work of the opposition, and second, intensifying the struggle to completely uproot the current regime."

It was not clear to what extent the draft was circulated among Iraqi exiles before Husayn Kamil returned to Iraq last week and was killed.

"The new political regime in Iraq should be a free, democratic regime based on political pluralism, peaceful coexistence, and strict adherence to the civic, political, economic, and social rights of all (Iraqi) citizens," he wrote in the document, a copy of which was obtained by the JORDAN TIMES.

He said Iraq was in a maze driven to it by the current one-man regime, that through its "internal repressive irresponsible policies, and its continuous involvement in war has caused Iraq's Arab and international isolation."

He call for the formation of what he called "a higher council to save Iraq" to lead the opposition movement and change the current regime.

He said he was motivated to write this draft charter because of the policies that the current regime had adopted since it came to power.

"It is a pity that all the political regimes in modern Iraq expressed solely their own will, instead of that of their people. They have neglected to respect the rights and aspirations of the masses. Since July 17, 1968 (since Saddam Husayn took power) the political regime has adopted yet another policy which is a war policy," he wrote. "This policy has led to the destruction of our nation instead of its progress."

He said he was motivated by a new vision aimed at saving Iraq from "autocratic" rule by creating an alternate atmosphere based on pure democracy.

He clearly highlighted the Kurdish-Iraqi problem and called on the need to solve it in a way that would ensure "the rights of Iraqis of Kurdish origins." He said the proposed council would play a major role in promoting democracy, and creating a state of freedom, law, and institutions based on the respect for human life and minorities.

"National diversity is not something Iraq alone enjoys, but it is common to other nations around the world. This is the bare reality that calls on us to lay the foundation of brotherly Arab-Kurdish relations based on national unity and gives us a chance to gain from other nations' experiences in that field," he wrote.

He called for dialogue with "our Kurdish brethren" that would guarantee their independent identity, and rights. He said that after this is done in a way that ensures their full rights, then the council should move on to a higher cause which is the national interest.

"We should commit to the basics of democracy in achieving our national interest. Steering away from democracy not only leads to autocracy, but also to the forfeiture of public freedoms and the spread of rumour and fear among the masses," he wrote.

The kind of democracy, he said the council would adopt was a democracy that believes in a multi-party system, with respect for the opinion of others; one that encourages a parliamentary life, and free elections.

"Free elections are the only way to voice the wishes of the majority while preserving the rights of the minority," he wrote.

He also called for the separation of the executive, legislative and judiciary powers in order to allow for the total independence of the judiciary system.

"The democracy the council calls for is one that guarantees the rights of all ethnic and religious minorities, and looks upon them equally in the eyes of the law," he wrote.

In the charter he also touched on the rights and freedoms of thought, religion, opinion and expression of Iraqis. he wrote "every Iraqi has the right to hold his officials to account for their actions. Every Iraqi should be protected by law, and is granted a free and fair trial. Every Iraqi has a right to a citizenship and a passport which cannot be withdrawn except by law."

He said Iraqis had the right to work and strike if they felt their rights were not granted, he said. They also had the right to organise themselves in unions, and to get social security in cases of unemployment, sickness, injury, or old age.

He wrote that he felt democracy would not be complete without freedom of trade. "We should encourage personal initiatives, and reinforce the economy without allowing the government to interfere except in cases that would benefit the national interest."

As for the freedom of the press, he said that he believed there should be a high degree of freedom of expression, and allowing the expression of the other opinion within the boundaries of the constitution. "Irresponsible freedom could lead to anarchy," he wrote.

He said that the media should never be exploited to achieve political aims, but should serve as a forum for expression.

The higher council to save Iraq, he wrote, would believe that the military should never get involved in politics. "Allowing the army to get involved in political life has set a precedent in the political life of Iraq, and we have seen the consequences of that involvement," he wrote. "The army's main duty is to protect the nation and not be used as a tool to repress its people, and terminate political rivals."

In the charter, he outlined the role of the internal security apparatus saying that it should serve as a public servant by providing security, and upholding the law rather than using it as a tool of repression.

He also touched on Iraq's regional and international role, encouraging a "policy of neighbourly relations with Muslim Turkey and Iran." He said he would like to see Iraq play a major role in promoting Muslim causes and helping Islamic nations around the world.

He also envisaged an Iraq that "respected the United Nations charter, and laws, as well as international agreements." He called for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, insisting that this region become a weapons-free zone.

The charter also touched on the rights of women, the right of freedom of religion, promoting the arts and culture, and encouraging free government-sponsored education.

Iraq: PUK's Talabani—Saddam Ordered Husayn Kamil's Death

NC2802165496 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has said that Saddam Husayn personally decided to kill Husayn Kamil and instructed his son 'Udayy and a number of Special Guard officers to implement the decision. In an interview with a BBC correspondent in Tehran, Talabani expressed his belief that Husayn Kamil decided to return to Iraq due to his desperation, frustration, and ignorance of the nature of the regime in Baghdad.

He said some parties in the Iraqi opposition are partly to blame for what happened to Husayn Kamil. The entire Iraqi opposition should have welcomed anyone (?leaving) the dictatorial regime and willing to join the opposition, especially the Arab officers who were accused of perpetrating crimes against the Shiites and the Kurds, he said. These officers, he added, must be pardoned, encouraged to break with Saddam, and be welcomed so as to fatally isolate Saddam Husayn.

Talabani said he has tried for the past few months to get the Syrian and Iranian authorities receive and cooperate with Husayn Kamil, but those two countries refused. He said the killing of Husayn Kamil and members of his family shows that Saddam Husayn is now panicking and experiencing the hardest and weakest time yet, because the conflict now involves his family. This horrible crime, he added, may deepen Saddam's isolation and the people's resentment.

Talabani added: I do not rule out any reckless act by the Iraqi dictator against Jordan's King Husayn or some members of his family. If we examine the record of this dictatorship, we will find it rife with illogical and unreasonable practices. For example, I remember that in (?March) 1990, in a lecture I delivered in London and Paris, I said that Saddam Husayn was preparing for to invade, occupy, and annex Kuwait. No one believed it because it sounded scientifically illogical. But Saddam Husayn has nothing to do with logic. So I do not rule out his carrying out any kind of act against King Husayn or members of the Jordanian ruling family; he hates them intensely now.

Jalal Talabani is now visiting Tehran. He held meetings with His Eminence Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, on ways to begin work in the field to foster change in Iraq and establish a democratic, federal, and pluralistic system in the country.

Iraq: Opposition Conference Reportedly To Convene in Damascus

JN2802214396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the major issues discussed by the Syrian-Iranian Joint Committee, which resumed its work today, was the situation in Iraq and coordinating the steps to be taken by Damascus and Tehran in this regard. It seems that these meetings resulted in the desire by both sides to hold a conference for the Iraqi opposition in Damascus within a few days, to which 40 key Iraqi figures will be invited, such as Talabani, Barzani, al-Hakim, and other figures affiliated with various Iraqi trends.

The Syrians informed their Iranian counterparts of the Iraqi opposition's wish that Syria open its borders with Iraq, which have been closed for the past 15 years, to allow individuals to enter Syria and use its airports as is the case in Amman, without the complications that used to occur in the past.

Following a meeting between Wafiq al-Samirra'i, former head of the Iraqi intelligence, and Mish'an al-Juburi, head of the right-wing al-Watan [the homeland] opposition party on the one hand, and Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam on the other, al-Juburi said: In addition to opening their borders, we asked the Syrians to extend food and medical assistance to the Iraqi people through Arab organizations such as the Arab League and the Syrian Red Crescent. They promised to seriously study the matter after consulting with other countries in the region so that there would not be any misunderstanding. Al-Juburi added that whoever thinks that the regime will fall by starving the Iraqis is mistaken. After meetings with Syrian political and security officials over the past few days, al-Juburi said that

Syria has agreed to open a headquarters for his party, al-Watan, in Damascus.

Iraq: Saddam Chairs 10th Cabinet Session on UN Talks, Economy

JN2802205996 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, has chaired the 10th cabinet session.

The cabinet reviewed the results of the first round of dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations on oil in exchange for food, medicine, and basic needs for the Iraqi people. The second round of dialogue is scheduled to be held on 11 March.

The cabinet also discussed the economic situation. The leader president, may God preserve him, stressed the continuation of the same policy which maintains market stability and balance in the prices of foodstuffs and other materials.

His excellency ordered that the Ministry of Trade continue to provide foodstuffs and other commodities through its outlets. He also stressed the need to continue organizing sales at these outlets in a way that facilitates citzens obtaining these commodities, particularly civil servants and the military with low incomes.

Regarding the importance of economic planning, the leader president, may God preserve him, stressed the need for linking figures and statistical data in planning with the situation on the ground. This is because this link is important in enhancing the various aspects of economic activity.

The cabinet also discussed the topics on its agenda and made the necessary recommendations and decisions.

Iraq: VP Ramadan To Carry Saddam Messages to Maghreb Leaders

MM2802154196 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "High-Ranking Iraqi Official To Visit Arab Maghreb States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rabat, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI bureau — AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has learned that a high-ranking Iraqi official will make a tour of the Arab Maghreb states within days. Arab diplomatic sources in Rabat have said that Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan will arrive in Algiers on a tour which will also take him to Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, and Morocco, carrying messages from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to the five states' leaders.

The sources did not reveal the content of these messages. However, they pointed to developments in relations between Iraq and the UN Security Council, especially after the launch of the "oil-for-food-and-medicine" negotiations concerning the implementation of Security Council Resolution 986. Big strides have been made in these negotiations between Iraq's representatives and the UN secretary general.

Iraq: Government Claims of Relaxation of Siege on Kurds Refuted

NC2802180096 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Feb 96

["Translated text" of a letter from Kusrat Rasul 'Ali, prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan, to the UN secretary general and UN Security Council president on 12 February—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Government of Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Office of the Prime Minister.

To UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

Date: 12 February 1996

Dear Mr. Butrus-Ghali: I recently sent a letter to Your Excellency on the talks between the United Nations and the Iraqi Government over UN Security Council Resolution 986. After that, the Iraqi Government issued a statement on the current situation in Kurdistan. I found it necessary to inform you of the following: The Iraqi Government's allegations that the blockade of Kurdistan Region has been eased are false. In fact, the blockade has been tightened, and the authorities are still preventing the arrival of fuel and food in Kurdistan. Indeed, fuel prices in the Governorates of Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah have increased, and the fuel shortage has caused a regrettable humanitarian crisis this cold winter.

The Iraqi Government seeks to convince the United Nations through its lies that it can be trusted to distribute humanitarian aid among the citizens in Iraqi Kurdistan. But the Iraqi Government's practices and policies prove that it cannot be trusted to extend services to the Kurdish people. This is the same government that has imposed a strict blockade on Iraqi Kurdistan and severed its administrative links with the region over the past five years. The best example is the exclusion of Kurdistan from the election farce that was staged to reelect Saddam Husayn.

In view of this and given Saddam Husayn's bloody history, which abounds with genocidal attempts against the Kurdish people, the justifications offered by the

Iraqi Government of its right to distribute humanitarian goods among the people of Kurdistan cannot be taken seriously. We stress to Your Excellency the need for the food and medicine that is to be purchased from the funds allocated to Kurdistan under Security Council Resolution 986, if it is implemented, to be distributed directly by the United Nations and the government of the Kurdistan Region, the latter being the legitimate locally-elected authority in the region. This should be done without any interference from the Iraqi Government.

If the suffering of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan is dealt with by the Iraqi Government alone, the humanitarian objectives of UN Security Council Resolution 986 will meet problems and obstacles. We therefore call on you not to allow this tampering.

Sincerely yours, Kusrat Rasul "Ali, prime minister of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

Iraq: U.S. Policy, Interference in Internal Affairs Criticized

JN2902080196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0725 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Feb (INA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that the feverish interference in the internal affairs of other countries has become one of the main policy characteristics of the United States, which wants to impose its hegemony on others through all forms of pressure.

In an article today, the newspaper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: The failure of the United States to convince the world that it is qualified to lead it into the next century as part of a new world order that secures popular interests and offers the chance for people to contribute to the development of humanity is what pushes it to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, without regard to their sovereignty over their land, resources, and establishments.

It adds: This situation will continue until the countries and peoples of the world realize their interests are threatened under the sovereignty of the U.S. interests. The road to this belief is open and is paved with self-defeating practices.

It says: U.S. slogans about a free, democratic world that secures and protects human rights have lost their attraction as a result of U.S. behavior inside and outside its borders and the world's awareness that the United States' deceptive humanitarian mask has fallen since the frenzy following the disintegration of the Socialist bloc.

The newspaper says the United States has unveiled its imperialist-Zionist nature and shown the world its true face and its single slogan, which says that everything is permissible for the sake of the U.S. interests and all ways and means are allowed.

The newspaper adds: All this means that the United States is turning the people and countries of the world into slaves subject to U.S. interests. The United States is making haphazard blow[illegible] and addresses others through threats and warnings.

AL-THAWRAH says the United States is not satisfied with making noise and inciting sedition; it launches direct aggression, interferes in internal affairs, as it did with Iraq during the 30-state aggression, and uses its international influence to perpetuate the brutal siege.

The newspaper says the United States is openly conspiring against security of Cuba and Iraq, in coordination with its domestic and regional agents. It is also preventing the formation of a Turkish government that may encroach on the presence of U.S. and foreign forces in the future and threatening China with trade sanctions.

Iraq: Tariq 'Aziz Meets German Friendship Society Official

JN2802133696 Baghdad INA in English 1120 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 29, INA [dateline as received] — Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz met here on Tuesday with head of the German-Iraqi Friendship Society Semer Field [name as received]. During the meeting, they discussed means of boosting cooperation between the two countries.

Iraq: Italian Delegation To Continue Talks on Interest Office

JN2802132696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 28 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — An Italian foreign ministry delegation leaves for Iraq on Wednesday [28 February] to continue negotiations over the opening of an Italian interest office in Baghdad at the Hungarian embassy. The delegation, which consists of the deputy director of the Middle East department at the Italian foreign ministry, and a diplomat from the Italian embassy in Amman, will hold talks with Hungarian embassy officials and is expected to meet with the director of the European department at the Iraqi foreign ministry. Sources said the talks are expected to be finalised by the beginning of May. The sources said the trip was planned before the recent developments in Iraq and is a follow-up on talks initiated in December last year. Iraq severed its diplomatic ties with Italy shortly after the beginning of the Gulf war in 1991.

Iraq: Trade Minister Meets With Spanish Delegation

JN2902104696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1330 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Feb (INA) — Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih met here today with Lewis Kalksika Nabaz [name as transliterated], member of the Spanish parliament and the Spanish Popular Party, and his delegation.

During the meeting, the officials reviewed trade relations between the two countries, the impact of the unjust blockade due to the lack of food and medicine, and the Trade Ministry's efforts to secure food for citizens by using ration cards.

Iraq: National Assembly Official Meets Spanish Delegation

JN2902104996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1335 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Feb (INA) — Ghanim 'Aziz Khadduri, deputy speaker of the National Assembly, met here today with Lewis Kalksika Nabaz [name as transliterated], member of the Spanish parliament and the Spanish Popular Party, and his delegation.

Khadduri called for active contribution and serious efforts to lift the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq and to enable Iraq to carry out an effective humanitarian role.

Nabaz voiced his absolute support for lifting the blockade imposed on Iraq because it threatens the lives and futures of innocent people. He also expressed his admiration for the great efforts the Iraqi people have made to rebuild Iraq and its infrastructure.

Iraq: Oil Minister Meets Kamlyk Republic President

JN2802122496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1025 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Feb (INA) — Kyrsan Almichnov, Kalmyk Republic president, met here today with Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, the oil minister.

They discussed cooperation between Iraq and the Russian Federation in the oil industry.

President Saddam Husayn yesterday received Almichnov, who conveyed a message that emphasized interest in reactivating the ties of cooperation and mutual interests between Iraq and the Russian Federation.

Iraq: Minister Receives Visiting Kalmyk Republic President

JN2902110096 Baghdad INA in English 1130 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 28, INA — President of Kalmyk Kyrsan Almichnov met here on Tuesday [27 February] with Iraq's Minister of Culture and Information 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur.

President of Kalmyk confirmed his admiration of Iraqis' reconstruction drive under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn in all fields of life despite the embargo. The minister reviewed the continuation of the cultural uprising in Iraq despite the difficulties emanating from the unjust blockade.

He also discussed means of enhancing the cultural and information relations between Iraq and Kalmyk as well as the United Russia for common interest of both countries.

Israel: Peres Says Goal Not To 'Break' 'Arafat, Warns of 'Downfall'

TA2902112796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that we are not out to break Yasir 'Arafat but to make it clear to him that if he does not mend his ways, he might bring about his own downfall. The prime minister added: We are not asking 'Arafat to serve the State of Israel but to live up to his responsibility for security in the areas under his control. It is inconceivable that there should be two armed powers within the same authority, Mr. Peres said. He was speaking during a meeting with the Hungarian defense minister, who is currently visiting Israel.

Israel: Baraq on Separation, Notes Threat to Further Redeployment

TA2902064096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says the long-term policy of the Israeli Government is to permanently separate Israel from the Palestinian territories:

[Begin Baraq recording, in progress] ...creates just security considerations, will continue to be so. But in the long term, our strategy is to lead to separation between these two peoples. This is the essence of what the assassinated Prime Minister Rabin initiated with Shim'on Peres when they entered the negotiations with the Palestinians. In a way, there are no alternatives between the Mediterranean and the Jordan [River]. Other alternatives are only either binational or a apartheid state or a kind of Bosnia or Belfast. We don't want any one of these and, as a result of it, the only practical way is to separate and to use what Frost described as high fences that make good neighbors. [end recording]

[A report by Liat Collins and Bill Hutman on page 1 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 29 February quotes Baraq as telling reporters at the end of yesterday's meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs: "We don't want to give the PA [Palestinian Authority] an ultimatum. I don't think it's effective or appropriate, but it's clear to Yasir 'Arafat that not only the redeployment from Hebron, but further redeployment, as well as the schedules and modalities of opening the permanent status negotiations and, in a way, even interaction in terms of the free flow of people and goods over the lines has to do with his efforts at crushing these terrorists."]

Israel: Beilin Says Permanent Status Accord Possible Within 1 Year

TA2902083796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Yosi Beilin says a Labor government, if reelected, could reach an agreement with the Palestinians on the permanent status arrangement within a year. Speaking in Jerusalem, Minister Beilin said Shim'on Peres and the Labor Party would seek in the elections a general mandate from the public to pursue an agreement.

[Begin Beilin recording] I wanted it to be finished even before the elections and to go to the elections with a solution agreed by the other side, not just with some ideas. That is over. Now I believe that we can do it in less than a year after the elections; to get a general mandate from our people, to go for it, and then to negotiate with the Palestinians and to have a permanent solution. And I also have the possibility now to go to the settlers, to move from one settlement to another — which is a very interesting new job that I got — and say to the settlers: You know, the biggest paradox in the world is that only the dovish — if you wish — part of Israel is the one which can solve your question marks, because only we can give you sovereignty. [end recording]

Minister Beilin was speaking to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Prime Minister Peres has already stated that he prefers a party platform which would broadly speak of his goal of regional peace without detailing how he intends to achieve it.

Israel: Post Says 'Arafat Uses Nazi Propaganda Methods

TA2902101996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 29 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "'Arafat's Blood Libel"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As first revealed in THE JERUSALEM POST on Tuesday [27 February], Yasir 'Arafat has been telling visiting diplomats that Israeli extremists were involved in Sunday's suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. He said he was certain that there is a right-wing organization in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] which provides Palestinian extremists with explosives, logistic help and expertise that are, he said, unavailable anywhere in the Arab world.

"Only a superman would have been capable of executing such a complicated operation without Israeli help," he told one visitor. He has even branded this purported

Israeli organization the OAS [Organisation de l'Armee Secrete], after the clandestine right-wing group in the French army which opposed the French withdrawal from Algeria.

This is not the first time 'Arafat has made such a charge. Following the Bet Lid bombing in January of 1995, which killed 21 Israelis, and again after the bus bombing in Jerusalem of August 1995, in which four Israelis died, he made similar charges. At one time he even named then chief of general staff Ehud Baraq, now foreign minister, as a leader of the group.

To Israelis such accusations are as deserving of attention as the ravings of a lunatic and as credible as other 'Arafat whoppers. In recent years he has charged that the ancient Hebrew coin imprinted on Israel's 10 agora coin is Israel's secret expansion map; that the blue stripes on Israel's flag represent the Nile and Euphrates rivers — the promised borders of "Greater Israel" in the Bible; that there is a map in the Knesset which shows all the territory between Egypt and Iraq under Israeli rule; and that Jesus was a Palestinian.

Government sources, who for obvious reasons preferred to remain anonymous, yesterday chastised 'Arafat through the media for propagating this nonsense. Embarrassed that such utterances can emanate from Israel's peace partner, they suggested that he should go after the real culprits rather than indulge in fantasies.

But it would be a mistake to dismiss this obscene libel as just another display of 'Arafat's eccentricity. 'Arafat does not believe in the existence of the "Israeli OAS" conspiracy any more than he and Hanan 'Ashrawi believe Jesus was a Palestinian. He has, after all, proved far more realistic than all those who habitually mock him. And if he insists on repeating these fantasies there must be method to his madness.

On the most immediate level, he must assume the lie — no matter how outrageous — will stick if repeated often enough. This was the basic tenet of Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels, and 'Arafat is nothing if not a good student of Nazi and Soviet propaganda techniques.

He clearly hopes to implant in Western minds at least a suspicion that those responsible for the heinous crimes in Jerusalem and Ashqelon are not members of an Islamic organization with which he has repeatedly professed close relations and solidarity, but some mysterious "extremists" on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian equation.

As all who heard Arafat's condemnation of the bombing on Sunday must have noticed, he did not condemn Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or Islamic Jihad, nor has he ever done so. On the contrary. He never misses an opportunity to call Hamas leader Shaykh Yasin "my brother" and demand his release, and he has lionized Islamic Jihad "martyrs." Nor has he ever referred to Hamas as anything but a legitimate opposition.

Moreover, by floating these big lies 'Arafat is risking nothing. The diplomats and journalists who hear his earnest descriptions of the conspiracy relate the story to their colleagues — with amused disbelief. But no one has ever called him to task, nor has anyone warned him that his credibility as a statesman might be damaged.

After the Bet Lid massacre, the late Yitzhaq Rabin once stalked out of the room when 'Arafat attempted to sell him this revolting canard. But Rabin returned and continued to negotiate. Nor has this or any other monstrous libel ever diminished the respect world leaders seem to have for him. If anything, it reinforces their resolve to help the Palestinian population with aid, grants and investments.

The fatuous, discredited notion that fanatics can be bought off with money, and that a higher standard of living will eliminate militant Islam seems to animate all Western leaders. That they trust 'Arafat to preside over this transformation is a measure of their own tenuous hold on reality.

Clearly, one need not be a psychiatrist to wonder if it is prudent to make agreements with a man capable of propagating big lies. For even the most charitable interpretation of his actions must imply that he is shirking his commitment to combat terrorism. A less kind, and more realistic assessment of his conduct is that he believes the democratic world is so soft and gullible that he can deceive it forever.

One should like to hope that like his totalitarian mentors he is mistaken about the strength of his adversaries' survival instincts. Surely, if there is one nation in the world which should know the cost of trusting dictators capable of such blood libels it is Israel.

Israel: Foreign Ministry Denounces Cuban Attack on U.S. Planes

TA2902101696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel today condemned the Cuban Government for attacking two U.S. planes five days ago. A communique released by the Foreign Ministry states that the Cuban Government must meticulously follow civil aviation regulations and proceed with restraint to prevent the recurrence of attacks on civilian aircraft.

Israel: Satisfaction With Primakov Message; Reply on Visit Awaited

TA2902113596 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Arye Dayan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov sent a personal message to his Israeli counterpart Ehud Baraq this week expressing condolences over the casualties in the Jerusalem and Ashqelon bombings and voicing a very sharp condemnation of their perpetrators.

Sources in Minister Baraq's bureau expressed satisfaction with the fact that Primakov's condolences were communicated in a personal message rather than an official statement on behalf of the Foreign Ministry in Moscow, as is usual in such cases. The satisfaction was voiced in view of the tension between Israel and Russia since Primakov's inauguration. In his message to Baraq, Primakov wrote that those responsible for the bloodshed in Jerusalem and Ashqelon are "evil extremists" and noted the Russian Government's commitment to act toward the attainment of "a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East."

On the other hand, the Israeli Foreign Ministry has not received any reply to Baraq's request for a meeting with Primakov to date. In the course of Baraq's meeting with Russian Ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin at the beginning of last week, the Russians were informed of the foreign minister's desire to visit Moscow and hold political talks with Primakov.

Israel: U.S. Seen Running Out of Patience With 'Arafat

TA2902121496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV [HAYOM supplement] in Hebrew 29 Feb 96 p 3

[Commentary by Washington correspondent Avino'am Bar-Yosef: "'Arafat Can Start Sweating"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Were I in Yasir 'Arafat's shoes this week, I would be sweating. Not only because of the painful outcry in Jerusalem or the impact of this tragedy on the election campaign and the change in the Israeli agenda. Nor because of the fig leaf the Palestinians provided to the right wing and the Likud to rally behind Binyamin Netanyahu. I would be sweating because Washington is about to come to the end of its rope with him and because the United States, after the appalling tragedies in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, has clearly had enough of his games, even if the Israelis let him sweet-talk his way out.

After Shim'on Peres was elected to replace the late Yitzhaq Rabin, the U.S. Administration had hoped to stage a spectacular ceremony on the White House lawn sometime in the summer in which the leaders of all the Arab countries, except the rejectionist states, would shake hands with the Israeli prime minister. It had hoped that, despite the price exacted from Israel, such a ceremony would not only ensure Labor's victory in the elections but would also yield Clinton big dividends in his bid for re-election.

When it transpired that al-Asad would disregard Israel's election timetable and would not extend his hand and that Peres was not ready to wait until November to hold the elections on schedule, an event was coordinated with AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee]. Bearing in mind the tragic events in Israel, the leaders of the pro-Israeli lobby on Capitol Hill decided that the theme of their annual convention would be the peace process rather than Jerusalem, the theme they chose last year. In addition to Shim'on Peres, they thought to invite not only King Husayn and President Bill Clinton but also Yasir 'Arafat.

When they began to plan the event, they realized it would be best to forgo the Palestinian presence at the political spectacle because 'Arafat's headdress was not telegenic.

After Shim'on Peres was elected to replace the late Yitzhaq Rabin, the U.S. Administration had hoped that his determination to promote his vision of "the new Middle East" would make it easier for it to obtain the necessary concessions from Israel. This hope, however, was coupled with apprehension. The administration knew it would have been harder with Rabin but, on the other hand, it believed he would have prevented a last-minute fiasco.

An administration official told me this week that the Americans believe that if Rabin had been prime minister on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, the war would have been prevented because he would not have taken the risk and would have mobilized the reserves in time. In other words, had the Shin Bet chief told him about the warnings, he would have imposed a closure without asking anybody, even if 'Arafat — or the Americans — had stood on their heads.

There is no doubt that the administration would like to see Labor defeat the Likud and, were it not afraid that a public display of support for Peres would boomerang against him, we would be witnessing a far more blatant involvement in the Israeli election campaign than a Clinton appearance alongside Peres at the AIPAC convention. In recent weeks, Washington has asked its embassy in Tel Aviv to file more political reports. The answer to date has been that it is too early to make clear-cut assessments.

The Americans did not dismiss the Israeli public opinion polls predicting victory for Peres but, due to their close knowledge of the men involved, they were anxious about the way in which Netanyahu will fight for his political survival or, in their words, the "Bibi-or-not-to-be" [last five words printed in English] element. Until earlier this week, they had thought that only a dramatic development — such as the right wing's rallying behind him and Levi's return home — would extricate Netanyahu from the dead end he has been facing since Rabin's assassination. They realized that Netanyahu would be willing to pay a hefty price just to save his skin. They did not want to think about three terrorist attacks, with so many casualties, within two days.

Here is where Yasir 'Arafat comes back into the picture. While the U.S. Embassy in Israel was cautious in its reports about the upcoming Israeli elections, USIA in the territories did not stop conducting independent polls. According to these, 20 percent of the population of the territories continues to support terror without being overly inconvenienced by the chairman.

Although the administration tends to placate Israeli officials by telling them that 60 percent support 'Arafat and his policy and that this is a significant improvement over the period preceding the Oslo agreements, the Americans know that according to intelligence assessments, 'Arafat — just like al-Asad — will not touch the fundamentalist terrorists because he plans to use them as necessary in the negotiations on the permanent arrangements, and the Americans are losing sleep over this. They are very firm with him in their meetings and demand not only that he change the Palestinian Charter but also extradite wanted men to Israel and stop the violations of the agreements and the incitement.

The Palestinians need U.S. legitimization as we need air to breathe. A senior official in a key congressional committee told me this week that Yasir 'Arafat's days of grace on Capitol Hill are over. "Luckily, AIPAC did not invite him to its convention. It spared him a big humiliation because, according to the new law, it is doubtful that he would have been allowed to enter the United States." Small wonder that if I were in his shoes, I would be sweating. Sweating buckets, that is....

Israel: Relations With Russia Seen as 'Mistrust'

TA2802182396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 28 Feb 96 p B2

[Article by Yosi Melman: "Israel on an Ungrateful Course"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Several months ago, Colonel Mikha'el Stieglitz completed his tour as Israel's military attache in Russia. Stieglitz, Avital Sharansky's brother, is an Artillery Corps officer and, naturally, speaks Russian and is familiar with Russian culture and life. To replace him, Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq decided to send Col. Tzvi Bluemenschtick, a Military Police officer who does not speak any Russian.

In private conversations, Russian officials often complain about this appointment which, they believe, attests to Israel's persistent disregard for Russia. They complain that Israel sends ranking generals with combat experience to other countries. Another expression of Israel's disregard for Russia, the officials say, is the appointment of Professor 'Aliza Shen'ar — a Haifa University professor, and not a senior and professional diplomat — as ambassador in Moscow. As a rule, they charge that most of the senior diplomatic staffers at the Moscow embassy are women. In a society still marked by machoism, this attests to a lack of consideration on Jerusalem's part.

Beyond these complaints, which may perhaps pass as honor games, Russia has claims regarding the nature of the relations. Russian spokesmen, including Ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin, do not hesitate in bringing them up. They complain, for example, about the unpleasant way Russian citizens are being treated upon arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport.

Inspired by Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal and Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz — who recently warned against the threat of the Russian mafia making Israel its home base — Border Police personnel view almost every Russian businessman as a representative of that mafia. For example, Yosef Kobzon, a popular singer and a wealthy businessman, was detained upon arrival at the airport, and released only after Ambassador Bovin and senior state officials intervened.

Knowledgeable sources say that hardly a day goes by without such an incident taking place at Ben-Gurion Airport. Most of the incidents go unreported, but the businessmen who free themselves with difficulty from the grip of the Border Police, find it hard to do business in Israel. Israeli companies avoid establishing contacts with them because of the hostile attitude and the stigma that identifies every Russian businessman with the mafia.

Another issue troubling Bovin and his staff is Russian Church real estate assets in Israel. The property — including the Russian Court in Jerusalem and other assets in Yafo and Tiberias — belonged to the USSR and Israel recognized them as Soviet-owned. After the USSR broke up, the Russian Government asked the Israeli Government to recognize it as heir to this property. But Israel is in no hurry.

According to Israeli legal experts, there is no certainty that Russia is the sole heir of the USSR. Countries such as the Ukraine or Belarus may also have claims to these properties. Israel's legalistic formalism annoys the Russian Government and is being perceived as deliberate foot dragging.

Only recently, after Ehud Baraq was appointed foreign minister, did he instruct his ministry's staffers to speed up registration procedures for former Soviet property. The problem, however, has not yet been solved and Amb. Bovin is still unhappy. According to him, the registration process is taking too long.

Obviously, the incident that cast a shadow on Israeli-Russian relations recently is the espionage affair in which a Mosad agent, operating out of the Israeli Embassy in Moscow under diplomatic cover, was involved. Russian officials consider the affair as mainly expressing Israel's ungratefulness. After all, they have allowed Nativ — the organization in charge of ties with Russian Jews — to work out of the embassy for years, despite the fact that the Russian administration considers Nativ and its members to be part of the Israeli intelligence community. Amb. Bovin is not speaking about a crisis between Israel and Russia in the wake of the espionage affair, but he does note that "such situations usually cause nervousness and mistrust on both sides."

Hence, this is yet another reason why Russia finds it hard to accept Israel's demands. In almost every meeting between the two countries the Israelis demand that Russia cease selling weapons to Iran, and especially, call off its plans to sell Iran a nuclear reactor. The Russians regard these demands as self-righteous and inconsiderate. First of all, Israel itself supplies arms to many countries and considers these exports an important economic tool. Doing the same is even more important to Russia in view of its economic plight, Russian officials say.

What is more, in the eyes of Russian policymakers, Iran has an important role as a counterbalance to Turkey's designs to penetrate the Muslim republics in the northern Caucasus and Central Asia. The Russian-Iranian rapprochement is manifested, among other things, in their cooperation in Afghanistan. Moscow and Tehran oppose the extreme Taleban faction, which enjoys the support of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and back its rival, which is considered a relatively moderate fundamentalist force.

The Moscow-Tehran axis, even if it does not last long, has gained prominence since Yevgeniy Primakov assumed the post of foreign minister. Primakov (academically trained as a traditional Arabist) wants to regain, with Iran's help, some of the strategic stature and influence Russia had in the Middle East in the golden era of Soviet foreign policy.

Primakov and his worldview worry leading Israeli foreign policymakers. It is against this backdrop that Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq recently said that he wants to meet Primakov. His aides note that Baraq's request is also meant to prevent a further deterioration of relations between the two countries. However, the Russians are not rushing to comply.

Some Russian officials would like to reciprocate with the same scorn and disregard. As they see it, Israel wooed the Soviet Union for many years, trying to establish diplomatic relations with it. However, after these were established during President Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure (Bovin was Gorbachev's last diplomatic appointment before the USSR collapsed), and after Jews were allowed to leave Russia almost without restrictions, Israel has been behaving as if it had Russia in its pocket.

The Russian ambassador in Israel says that the two foreign ministers will meet "when Baraq goes to Moscow or when Primakov comes to Israel," but does not cite a specific date.

"Our problem," concedes a senior Israeli familiar with relations between the two countries, "is that we see everything from the narrow perspective of Jewish immigration. In fact, there is no Israeli policy vis-a-vis Russia. The Jewish issue can be a lever to build a relationship, but cannot replace a policy. Dozens of Israeli cabinet ministers and officials are constantly visiting the United States, West Europe, Japan, and China. How many of them go to Russia to hold serious and substantial talks?"

According to this senior official, Israeli foreign policymakers will ultimately have to recognize the great potential of Russia, which will sooner or later regain its position as a superpower. "Under Primakov's leadership Russia is trying to formulate a new foreign policy and concept for the world in general and the Middle East in particular. We must make up our mind whether we want to be part of that concept or not."

However, Israel's desire to improve relations will not come true unless there is a quid pro quo. As Moscow has already signaled, the price Israel will have to pay will come at the expense of the peace process. If and when the foreign ministers of the two countries meet — either in Jerusalem or in Moscow — Primakov will tell Baraq in no uncertain terms that an improvement in relations will occur only if Israel recognizes Russia's status and enables it to play a more active role, even if not equal to that of the United States, in the process.

Amb. Bovin also attaches importance to Russia's role in the process.

[Melman] What role is Russia seeking to play in the peace process?

[Bovin] Russia is a cosponsor of the peace process, and it tries its best to help the sides to promote their positions so that they may reach an arrangement.

[Melman] Do you feel that, compared to the United States, Israel has a dismissive attitude toward Russia with regard to its involvement in the peace process?

[Bovin] That is not the impression in general, but sometimes there is friction in everyday working relations.

[Melman] What are Russia's demands of Israel?

[Bovin] Demands may not be the right word, but, first of all, Russia would be grateful to the Israeli authorities if Russian citizens arriving at Ben-Gurion Airport were treated in a kinder and more respectable manner. Second, from our point of view, the process of registering property previously owned by the Soviet Union in Russia's name has been taking far too long.

Israel: Operation of Mosad Agent in Moscow Detailed

TA2702184596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Feb 96 p B2

[Article by Yosi Melman: "Pollard in Moscow"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some two months after a Mosad agent in Moscow was caught handling a local agent on a spying mission, and some three weeks after the details were leaked to the media (in a report by Aluf Ben, HA'ARETZ, 6 February), the relevant elements in the Israeli intelligence community and their political masters continue to behave as though nothing happened.

The Mosad agent, who acted under cover as a diplomat working in the Israeli Embassy in Moscow, returned to Israel some time ago. According to sources in Moscow, the man bears the rank of colonel and was loaned to the Mosad several years ago by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to serve in the Israeli Embassy. The expose on the affair has not led to the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry; no personal conclusions were drawn, and it seems as though efforts are being made to hush the affair up.

The blunder here is exceptional in magnitude. One cannot recall a similar case in which an Israeli intelligence agent was caught in the act of spying in a friendly country. In this case, Russia should at least be regarded as a nonhostile country.

Only in one case were Mosad agents expelled from a friendly country. This occurred approximately 10 years ago in London. Margaret Thatcher's government asked Israel to recall five Israelis who, according to various reports, acted under diplomatic cover out of the Israeli Embassy in London. They were involved in handling Palestinian agents who infiltrated into a PLO cell. Other members of the same cell were involved in murdering a Palestinian caricaturist working for a Kuwaiti paper who ridiculed Yasir 'Arafat.

From media reports, however, there seems to be a big difference between the Mosad's entanglement in Moscow and the London affair. The five Israelis in London were not caught in the act of spying, and they certainly did not spy against Britain. They were forced to return to Israel because the Thatcher government was angry over what it considered a violation of its understandings with Israel.

In relations between the intelligence communities of two friendly countries, it is the normal practice that agents of one country who want to operate in the other against targets of a third country ask their local colleagues for permission. In the London affair, the Mosad failed to do this and was consequently punished. The London affair involved a murder case, and the British believed that the Palestinian agents working for Israel — and through them, their handlers — possessed information regarding the murder.

The Moscow affair was serious in several ways that go beyond the bare fact that a Mosad agent was caught in the act of spying. According to Russian media reports, which are based on information provided by the Russian Federal Security Service (parallel to the Israeli Shin Bet), Russian agents tracked the Mosad agent and documented his meeting with a local agent, which was held at a public location in Moscow. When they were convinced that the meeting was over — the Israeli received top secret documents, including Russian spy satellite photos of strategic targets in an Arab state, and the Russian agent received money in exchange — they quickly detained the two.

The Moscow sources revealed that tens of thousands of dollars were discovered in the Russian agent's possession. The Mosad man claimed diplomatic immunity, but Russian security service agents, who ignored him for a while, finally searched him and discovered the photographs.

Yet what is even more serious is that there was someone who decided to use a Mosad operator, trained for diplomatic duty, on an espionage mission. A CIA report on the Israeli intelligence community states that in some Israeli Embassies, Mosad branches (stations) conduct liaison and coordination missions with the local services. In a similar manner, foreign intelligence staffers, who are sent here to serve as liaisons with Israel's secret services, work out of their embassies in Israel. Victor Ostrovsky revealed in his book "By Way of Deception" that the Mosad unit responsible for assigning these representatives is dubbed Tevel [Universe].

Their assignment as liaisons makes them known to the local services, and they make no effort to hide it. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the security services of countries in which these representatives are accredited closely monitor their activities.

That is why intelligence services do not usually use personnel working under diplomatic guise for operations involving espionage and secret (contrary to overt, which is customary) information gathering. A state planning to conduct an intelligence operation in a friendly country sends deep-cover intelligence agents, who operate under the guise of businessmen or tourists, or some other cover. Staffers working at the local embassy are out of bounds.

For instance, if the CIA wants to conduct a certain operation in Israel, it will not use staffers working under diplomatic cover but rather send agents from the United States or some other country on the mission.

Moreover, it was naive to believe that a Mosad agent, who is known to the Russian authorities by virtue of his diplomatic employment at the embassy, would be able to evade the Russian surveillance to which he was bound to be subject. The Russian security service — the KGB's successor — has amassed great experience and scored many successes in monitoring foreign diplomats.

It is hardly possible that an operation of this nature could have been launched without the knowledge and approval of S., who heads the Mosad. S., who will have completed an eight-year term at the end of the year, has no interest in an in-depth investigation of the affair. What is even more surprising is that the affair has not been discussed in forums that are in charge of S. and the Mosad — either the cabinet or the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs. None of the ministers demanded explanations from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres even after the media began to report on the affair.

Two previous failures which occurred during S.'s term were publicized by the media. The first was his decision to try to prevent the U.S. publication of Ostrovsky's book by legal action. His erroneous decision achieved the opposite results. It helped promote the book, made the author rich, and gave him and his book greater credibility than they deserved in the eyes of the world. In the second instance, Israelis who were reported to be Mosad agents were captured near the Iranian Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, several years ago.

One possible explanation for the political establishment's inertia is the impending elections. "The present atmosphere in the government is inappropriate for probing sensitive issues," several ministers confirmed. Peres and most of the ministers have no interest in rehashing the affair, which may become very embarrassing for them.

But still, how can one explain the decision to launch such a high-risk operation? Only in rare cases are intelligence communities and the responsible political echelons tempted to break their own ironclad rules and take risks by using diplomatic envoys.

It usually happens when the merchandise offered is very valuable and when there is no possibility of contacting the information supplier in any other way (taking him out of his country, for instance). Yet even if we assume that the Russian reports are correct and that the information offered by the Russian scientist was excellent, the people in charge should have seriously pondered the question of whether risking our ties with Russia was worthwhile.

The Moscow incident is reminiscent of the Pollard affair: The inability to resist the temptation when secret and important information is offered, and the use of diplomatic representatives to handle a local agent in exchange for money. In both cases, the temptation included high-resolution military satellite photographs. In both cases, after the affairs came to light, there were self-justifying assertions that the acts of espionage were not aimed against the United States or Russia. In both cases, Israel attempted to claim that the other party, too, spies on and collects information in Israel. This is the backdrop for the large number of recent Israeli media reports stating that Russia has intensified its intelligence endeavors in Israel and that nearly half of its diplomatic staff have been identified as intelligence personnel.

And yet, despite the innuendoes on the subject, Israel has yet to catch a single Russian diplomat in the act of gathering intelligence. Despite that fact, after Russia requested that Israel recall the Mosad agent, some people proposed to retaliate by banishing a Russian diplomat.

The logic that guided the authors of this suggestion was intrinsically Russian. It was the Soviet and it is the Russian modus operandi. When one of its diplomats is expelled, it immediately retaliates with a counterexpulsion. Yet, fearing a deterioration in the relations between the two countries, Jerusalem decided against retaliation after all.

It seemed to be the right decision. Shortly after the Mosad agent's capture and following contacts between the two sides, the Russian intelligence community agreed to the request not to publicize the affair. The reports in Israel surprised and annoyed the Russians.

The affair seems to have had no real damaging effect on the ties between the two countries. Some Jerusalem officials believe that there is no call for a comparison between the aftereffects of this affair and those of the Pollard affair. These officials hope that, contrary to the Pollard affair, which seriously harmed Israeli-U.S. relations and left many unresolved tensions, the Moscow incident will leave no scars on the ties between the two countries.

It would be irresponsible, however, to assume that the Russians will immediately assume a business-as-usual stance. In a first comment on the affair, Russian Ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin stressed: "Such situations usually cause tension on both sides and generate mutual mistrust."

Israel: Commentary Attacks Peres', U.S. Policy on Syria

TA2802145796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 28 Feb 96 p B1

[Commentary by 'Aqiva Eldar: "In al-Asad's Neighborhood"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If the fatal attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon are not enough to instill doubts in voters' hearts about Shim'on Peres' vision of Israeli-Arab coexistence, the Maryland talks opening today will remind them that Labor's candidate for prime minister insists on betting on a deal with the only neighbor who identifies with the murderers. Yitzhaq Rabin's call for "separation" after the murder of Helena Rapp in Bat Yam helped him win the 1992 elections, just as four years earlier the attack in Jericho distanced Peres from the prime minister's bureau.

Shortly before his assassination, Rabin let Hafiz al-Asad know that he had learned the ways of the Middle East marketplace. After becoming convinced that at al-Asad's pace there was no chance of reaching an acceptable agreement before the elections, Rabin decided to remove the Golan Heights mine field from the political agenda. He refused to reduce the agreed upon price — military talks without preconditions, including discussions on early warning stations — and shook off the U.S. lobbying efforts.

Rabin's assassination convinced al-Asad to reopen the talks under the wide-ranging agenda of Peres, who repeatedly stressed that peace is more important than elections. Dennis Ross and his colleagues came to Jerusalem with a touching story about the conversation they had in Damascus about the Tel Aviv assassination. They convinced Peres (and themselves) that the assassination had a major impact on al-Asad. Following two barren symposia at Wye Plantation and two superfluous shuttles by Warren Christopher, even Peres reached the conclusion that Rabin was right: Peace is more important than elections, but this time around we have a strange partner, and therefore it is very easy to lose both.

The heads of the U.S. peace team protest about the Peres government decision to advance the elections and to move the negotiations with Syria to the back burner. They still believe it was a political mistake since no achievement is expected along the Palestinian track in the coming months, and had Peres waited until late October the agreement with Syria would have fallen into his lap like a ripe fruit on the very eve of the elections. Although he remained unconvinced, Peres responded to the calls by the Americans (and Uri Savir) to continue "virtual" negotiations without "virtually" peeking at the election timetable.

What sort of electoral damage, you will say, can peace talks at an isolated guest house in Maryland cause? They will talk, eat, make some more chemistry, go home, and return. Question: Would the government have sent the Foreign Ministry director general, two generals, a senior ambassador, and a team of economic experts to meet this week with Palestinian Authority representatives had 'Arafat avoided denouncing the terrorist attacks? What should the Israeli public think about negotiations with a regime whose government radio explains that "the occupier is the aggressor and the terrorist." Even Saudi Arabia and the Arab League uncharacteristically denounced the murders of the "innocent" bus passengers.

Damascus Radio also claimed that the United States and Israel want to stall the talks because progress will not serve their interests. It appears that during their 17 shuttles the Americans did not succeed in teaching the Syrians the basics of Israeli politics. A Walid al-Mu'allim announcement of regret, denunciation, and condolences to Savir would have been considered important progress and would have served Israeli and American interests. The Syrians are intervening in the elections. Their cumulative arrogant conduct (see al-Asad's behavior following Rabin's assassination) serves the interests of the Likud. Their unyielding toughness removes from Labor the possibility of justifying its policy of compromise and turns Peres' optimism into an electoral liability.

How could al-Asad's interests and his Arab honor have been harmed had the current round, or the following one — the one to take place virtually on the eve of the elections — concluded with a joint announcement of the three delegations (and perhaps another White House ceremony)? What harm could a framework agreement for security arrangements, normalization, and cooperation in developing water resources have done him? Syria does not need to give up a single centimeter of the Golan Heights for that. Even if the details are put off until the next memorandum, nobody will suspect al-Asad of giving up territory. Bill Clinton appreciates such contributions to his election campaign.

And, perhaps, al-Asad understands better than everybody else what is good for al-Asad. Saddam Husayn's massacre of the fathers of his grandchildren was a reminder that the rules of the game in his neighborhood are very different from those the Americans and the Israelis want to see there.

Jordan: King Husayn Meets With Talabani, Barzani Envoy in London

MM2902123896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Feb 96 p 1, 6

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "King Husayn Meets With Jalal Talabani and Barzani's Representative In London"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Informed sources in London have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that King Husayn held talks yesterday during two separate meetings with Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and Muhsin Dazah'i [as transliterated], personal envoy of Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Mas'ud Barzani, and that he discussed with them the situation in Iraq.

As is known, during a previous visit the Jordanian monarch made contacts by telephone from London with Barzani and Talabani in north Iraq. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Checks on Travelers from Iraq 'Substantially Relaxed'

MM2802152396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Security Burden Eases After Husayn Kamil's Departure; Jordan Relaxes Measures on Border With Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Jordanian authorities have reduced their tight security measures on the Jordanian-Iraqi border following the return last week of the former Iraqi official General Husayn Kamil and his brothers Saddam and Hakim to Baghdad, where they were killed.

Authoritative Jordanian sources have said that travelers' movement between Jordan and Iraq has not been interrupted at all, nor has it been affected by the return of Husayn Kamil and his escorts or their tragic end in Baghdad.

Iraqis arriving in Amman have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the measures taken by Jordanian authorities on the border with Iraq have been relaxed over the past few days, including scrutiny of the identity [documents] of travelers, especially Iraqis, and enquiries into the reasons for their coming to Jordan and the addresses of their relatives or friends.

Measures taken to search travelers' luggage and vehicles coming from Iraq have also been substantially relaxed, even though the search process is continuing.

Arrivals say that Jordanian security checkpoints between the border and the capital have been reduced in terms of their number and the measures applied, especially identity checks on those coming from Baghdad and searches of their belongings.

Jordan: Ties With Syria To Improve 'in Coming Weeks'

MM2802145796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Talks About Contacts With Syria To Improve Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Authoritative Jordanian sources stressed in Amman yesterday that Jordanian-Syrian relations are expected to improve in the coming weeks, saying that contacts between the two countries are being conducted behind the scenes to ensure success for the efforts being made to restore relations to their normal state.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the telephone conversation between King Husayn of Jordan and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad on the eve of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr had helped to melt the ice in these relations.

The Jordanian sources pointed out that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak had contributed effectively to preparing the atmosphere for restoring Jordanian-Syrian relations to their normal state.

As is known, the Syrian Government agreed recently to the appointment of a new Jordanian ambassador to Syria, namely Nasuh al-Majali. For two years it had objected to the appointment of a new Jordanian ambassador as an expression of its refusal to cooperate politically with Jordan. Syria has not appointed an ambassador to Jordan for two years.

Lebanon: Army Declares Curfew in Beirut, Other Cities

NC2802175796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Communique issued by the Lebanese Army Command; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] In accordance with Decree No. 7988, dated 27 February 1996, asking the Army to maintain security, in accordance with the Cabinet decision dated 27 February 1996 banning gatherings and demonstrations, in order to prevent any acts that could disturb security and public safety and to preserve the citizens' interests and safety, it has been decided:

1. A curfew will be imposed in Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Juniyah, Tripoli, Ba'labakk, al-Nabatiyah, B'aqlin, and Zahlah as of 0300 [0100 GMT] on Thursday, 29 February 1996, and until further notice.

2. The following individuals and bodies will be excepted from the curfew: deputies, ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, United Nations employees, medical organizations, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, ambulances, administrative and technical employees working in medical institutions and hospitals, employees and workers of the electricity, water, and telephone authorities, bakers, airline employees and cars, printing workers, newspaper distributing companies, cars carrying sick or injured people, journalists, local and foreign correspondents, and employees of the state's public establishments.

3. The identity of these persons and groups will be authenticated by official and personal identity cards.

4. The curfew will be lifted daily in accordance with subsequent communiques that will be broadcast on radio and television.

5. At anyone seen carrying weapons will be fired on.

6. The Army is asked to implement this communique. Violators will be referred to military courts.

7. The suburbs of Beirut are defined by a line starting from Khaldah intersection and passing through Khaldah, al-Shuwayfat, al-Hadath, Galerie Sim'an, Chevrolet, al-Hayik traffic circle, Salome traffic circle, the Salome highway, and Nahr al-Mawt bridge. The areas and suburbs lying between this line and the sea extending from Nahr al-Mawt to Khaldah through Ra's Bayrut are considered within the curfew area.

[Signed] Army Commander General Emile Lahhud

Lebanon: Curfew Introduced; Situation 'Calm' Amid Security Measures

NC2902100796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports coming in from our correspondents in the various areas say the security situation is calm amid the Security Forces' measures to implement the Lebanese Army Command's curfew in Beirut and its suburbs, Sidon, Tyre, Tripoli, Ba'labakk, al-Nabatiyah, Juniyah, B'aqlin, and Zahlah. The curfew was imposed to avert any acts that violate security and the general peace. The curfew will apply from 0300 [0100 GMT] until further notice.

Lebanon: Minister Comments After Cabinet Session on Strike, Curfew

NC2802211296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Statement by Information Minister Farid Makari following the Council of Minister's ordinary session in Beirut on 28 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers held its weekly session under his excellency the prime minister. At the beginning of the session, the Council reviewed reactions to the decision it made yesterday in its extraordinary session, which was chaired by his excellency the president. The Council expressed satisfaction with the positions adopted by political, trade union, labor, and educational leaders. It voiced regret at the negative positions of the General Labor Federation and some other political bodies, even though the government had approved a series of measures and social, health, and educational services. The Council stresses its solidarity with the workers and professionals and it stands in the same ranks with them for a better society.

The Council of Ministers stressed that discussions with the concerned parties will continue despite their negative positions, which in no way serve the public interest, certainly not the interests of the production sector. The Council of Ministers also stressed that it will continue to address the social problems and study appropriate solutions to them. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Minister, [words indistinct] the state of emergency and curfew in the country?

[Makari] You know that at yesterday's extraordinary session under his excellency the president, it was agreed that the Army would assume security duties for three months. The Army may have information that things might get out of hand, so it decided to take these measures (?temporarily).

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] in its statement today called [words indistinct] that the military establishment should protect the demonstrations [words indistinct].

[Makari] Sometimes the publicized information is different than that available to the Army command. This is an internal arrangement, and the Army is entrusted with the mission.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Makari] No. I am sure that if the Army command and officials find no need for it, the state of emergency will be lifted.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, didn't the last-minute efforts with the General Labor Federation and the parliamentary proposal make any progress?

[Makari] I believe that His Excellency Nabih Birri and the esteemed Chamber of Deputies made a good attempt for which they must undoubtedly be thanked. But when there was no response from the General Labor Federation, they stopped the initiative.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] and this is the first time this happens. [Passage indistinct]

[Makari] The Council of Ministers yesterday decided to hand over this mission to the Army and its command. Usually, the Army command has its own information. It found it necessary to take this measure.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] this information reveal a clear threat to security?

[Makari] No, I do not think things are that bad. We are accustomed to blowing things out of proportion, but you can view this as an additional precaution.

Lebanon: General Labor Federation To Adhere to Curfew

NC2802183996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ilyas Abu-Rizq, leader of the General Labor Federation [GLF], has issued the following statement: We have received the Army command's communique declaring a curfew. In harmony with our decision today to avoid any clash with the Army and because our battle is for the sake of reconstruction and reform and to defend freedom, democracy, and livelihood, we consider that the public referendum has taken place and that the size of the popular confrontation of the government's policy of repression and starvation has been ascertained. The harm this policy has inflicted on the people and on Lebanon's reputation abroad has also been ascertained.

While declaring our adherence to the curfew decision, we affirm that the confrontation will continue until justice is established and our demands are met. We will call the GLF Executive Council to hold an emergency meeting to determine future steps for our continuing activity.

Lebaon: Defense Minister—Limited Curfew Violations 'Handled'

NC2902110696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1000 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] National Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has stated that security in the country is good. There is complete adherence and a full response to the Army Command's decision to impose a curfew. Minister Dallul reassured citizens that there is nothing to worry about because things are proceeding soundly. Some very limited violations, such as the burning of tires, have been handled. Asked by the radio news department of the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY on the continuation of the curfew, Dallul said the decision was made to prevent attacks on property, to protect and guard citizens, and to secure stability in the country. He said that by the end of today or by tomorrow morning the curfew decision will be reviewed. The defense minister expressed his satisfaction with the measures taken so far. He stressed the democratic nature of the system. He said: We cannot interpret democracy the way we please. He expressed his hope that the government and General Labor Federation [GLF] will start a dialogue soon to discuss demands. He stressed that no one should believe that the government is a party opposed to the GLF or vice versa.

Asked whether the GLF might insist on its stance, Dallul said: We and the GLF are responsible for this homeland. There is no such thing as personal stubbornness in national action. He said that confrontation is in no one's interest.

Lebanon: Army Command Lifts Curfew; Security Measures To Continue

NC2902120396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1141 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners, we are in direct contact with our newsroom for the latest news:

The Army Command issued the following communique a short time ago: The curfew will be lifted in all Lebanese areas as of 1400 [1200 GMT] on 29 February and until further notice.

The country's armed forces have been instructed to carry out the provisions of this communique. They will continue to perform their tasks in maintaining security and public order.

[Place and date] Al-Yarzah [Defense Ministry] 29 February

[Signed] Army Commander General Lahhud

Lebanon: GLF Vows To Challenge Government on Demonstrations

NC2802135196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1225 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources of the General Labor Federation [GLF] have told our radio that the GLF has decided to abide by its decision to stage demonstrations and strike, despite the cabinet's decisions and in retaliation for [Prime Minister Rafiq] al-Hariri's stubbornness.

Lebanon: Hizballah Statement on Government Handling of Union Demands

NC2902085696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has issued a statement, saying:

The recent deadlock into which al-Hariri's government has thrust the country has revealed the reality behind its wretched economic policy and the gap between the majority of the Lebanese people of all classes and groups and the government, which is ready to forfeit the security and stability of the country without answering the requests of its oppressed people.

The Hizballah statement adds: The government's policy has been to turn its back on the country's increasing social concerns and problems. The government has not responded to the demands of the crushed people, has insisted on taking an oppressive and unjust stance toward these people, and plunged the army into direct confrontation with the people, turning it into a mask behind which it hides. This is a government unable to run the country with logic, justice, and fairness and that has forced things into a state of curfew. These are all blatant signs of the bad conditions and the absence of good intentions required for Lebanon.

The statement continues: All these will impose burdens and losses on the political, security, economic, and investment fields, burdens much greater than any there would have been had the government responded to the demands of the crushed and oppressed low-income group.

The Hizballah statement says: The government lost the round in the battle with the General Labor Federation when it forced the implementation of a curfew. The curfew does not exclude the oppressed people, who should have been allowed to continue their legitimate struggle and jihad to get their rights and demands.

The statement concludes: We, in Hizballah, while confirming our support for the rights of our oppressed people and the just demands of the workers and unions, blame the government for the deterioration of the situation in the country and the results of the dictatorial and oppressive policy it is using against citizens.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Receives Iranian Official, Qatari Message

NC2802141596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi received Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian deputy foreign minister for Middle Eastern affairs, at the B'abda Palace today. Iranian Ambassador Homayun 'Alizadeh attended the meeting. The Iranian official said he invited al-Hirawi, on behalf of the presidents of Iran and Turkmenistan, to attend the opening of a rail link between Central Asia and China via the Persian Gulf. Sheykholeslam expressed support for the Resistance in the south.

President al-Hirawi also received a message from the Qatari amir, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, delivered by Qatari Ambassador in Beirut Muhammad 'Ali al-Nu'aymi. The ambassador said the message contains an invitation for al-Hirawi to visit Qatar. He said al- Hirawi promised to visit at the earliest opportunity.

Lebanon: Buwayz Tells Iranian Official Resistance Must Conform

NC2802204896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz received Hoseyn Sheykholeslam today, Iranian deputy foreign minister for Middle Eastern affairs. Buwayz told the Iranian official that "we support the resistance, but it must conform to our political stances."

Buwayz added that the Iranian official briefed him on the visit of Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi and Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to Damascus, the topics discussed there, and the return of Syrian-Iranian relations to normal.

Lebanon: French Defense Minister Meets al-Hirawi, Makes Statement

NC2902111196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Defense Minister Charles Millon has renewed his country's recognition of Lebanon's absolute sovereignty and independence throughout its territory. Answering a question after visiting President al-Hirawi, Millon said: If agreement is reached on the situation in southern Lebanon, France is ready to contribute as part of an international cooperation effort to keep the peace. He added: If a multinational force is necessary to keep the peace in this part of the Middle East, that is, in Lebanon, then France is ready to take part in this force. He said the objective behind his visit is to confirm technical cooperation between the French and Lebanese armies and to overhaul some Lebanese military equipment.

Millon then visited Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri accompanied by the French ambassador and the military delegation.

Lebanon: Buwayz Receives New U.S. Ambassador's Credentials

NC2902071596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz received yesterday a copy of the credentials of the new U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, Richard Jones, in preparation for submitting them to President Ilyas al-Hirawi at a later date. The meeting between the ambassador and Buwayz lasted 40 minutes, after which the U.S. ambassador did not wish to make any statement.

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Detonates Charge Under Patrol

NC2902091596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Report by Sa'id Darwish in al-Nabatiyah—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0615 [0415 GMT] today, a group from the Islamic Resistance detonated an explosive device under a Lahdist patrol on the Bayt Lif-al-Qawzah road, killing or wounding patrol members.

Elsewhere, attacks on the defenseless and liberated areas continued from the enemy and Agent positions with the participation of Zionist helicopters. The helicopters used heavy machine guns to rake Wadi Sribbin and Haris, which was accompanied by 155-mm artillery shelling from the Yarin post in the western sector. The 'Alman post shelled the al-Litani River basin using 120-mm artillery shells. Last night helicopters flew for two hours over the areas of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and the outskirts of Mayfadun. They threw flares while flying low over these areas. They also overflew the areas of al-'Ayshiyah and al-Rayhan and the heights around Iqlim al-Tuffah, Shaqra, Qabrikha, al-Majdal, and Wadi al-Saluqi in the western sector. Sources from the occupied strip said the enemy and Agent forces yesterday besieged the town of al-Tirah, gathered residents in the town square, and insulted and threatened them indiscriminately. The Agents and enemy army searched all the houses in the town amid an atmosphere of fear. They terrorized women and children in the town. They also scattered the contents of the houses they searched and broke some things. The enemy and their Agents then destroyed two houses in the village.

[In a related report Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic at 0800 GMT on 29 February adds the following: "This morning an explosive charge went off on the Bayt Lif road when a South Lebanese Army patrol was passing by. The explosion caused no injuries among patrol members."]

Syria: Bombings in Israel 'Condemned,' Seen as 'Lesson' for Peace

JN2902070996 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 28 Feb 96 p 5

[Editorial by Walid Shihadah]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Syrian and Israeli negotiators are due to resume their talks on peace at Maryland, near Washington. According to American sources Secretary of State Warren Christopher will take part in these talks when he comes back to Washington from his Latin American trip. But Israel's pre-occupation with the Knesset elections will overshadow the talks, so any breakthrough or any progress will be automatically ruled out, and the talks may centre on general ideas of security arrangements on both sides of a borderline that must be the line of Israel's withdrawal in compliance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, or more specifically, the lines of June 4, 1967.

Incidentally, the Israeli negotiators will be coming to Maryland from the ordeal of two bombing operations that left a high toll among the Israelis. Although the incidents are condemned, these bombings and acts of violence, and the ensuing closure of the occupied territories must be a lesson from which everybody should know that real peace is the only way to end tension and violence. Real peace means the return of land and right to their indigenous owners. The Israeli government and its negotiators at Maryland should understand that retaining the land and getting peace together do not create peace. Or if they do, the peace achieved on this basis will be fragile, as is the case with that type of peace agreed between Israeli and a group of Palestinians. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn in September 1993, there have been acts of violence and counter violence. The Hebron Mosque massacre and the bombing in Tel Aviv, the killing of Palestinian freedom fighters and other incidents of explosions here and there inside Israel or in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are all signs of the fragility of the peace made by lame accords.

From this, lessons must be drawn that peace must be built on sound foundations. And from this stems the honourable Syrian stand that calls for just peace. Justice is the medium in which lost rights are completely recovered by their owners, whereas injustice breeds more violence. Against this background Syria has made its strategic option for peace, and for which she is cooperating with constructive effort, and is keen on getting the process along to reach its target of just and comprehensive peace.

Moreover, as part of the endeavours to create just peace, there has to be an understanding ruling negotiations that nothing must be done that encroaches upon the sovereignty of any party. Security arrangements, the major issue in the Maryland talks, must be equal and reciprocal. Syria's security needs must be taken into consideration, not only Israel's needs. The land for peace formula, proposed since the beginning of the peace process, must be the pivot and ultimate end of talks, because it is deemed to be the only channel leading to peace. Israel must give up its deal of getting both land and peace. This is if the Israelis are really keen to live and let live in peace.

Syria: Prime Minister, Iran's Habibi Discuss Economic Ties

LD2902133896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] First Vice President Hasan Habibi at his meeting with the Syrian Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi today discussed expansion of cooperation between Iran and Syria and other countries of the region.

According to a report of the Central News Unit from Damascus, Mr. Habibi, referring to Islamic Republic of Iran's economic and industrial progress in recent years, stressed the need for expansion of ties and coordination among the Islamic countries, especially Iran and Syria, to counter economic and political pressures of the West. [passage omitted]

The Syrian prime minister, in turn, expressed happiness with Iran's progress in the agricultural and industrial fields and stressed that Syria would like to benefit from trade with Iran.

Mr. Mahmud al-Zu'bi also welcomed the setting up of the annual joint commission and expert committees, comprising officials from the two countries, and instructed the Syrian minister of economy and foreign trade to set up the joint commission and to follow up the newly signed economic agreements.

The prime minister of Syria also referred to Mr. Habibi's visit as the beginning of a transformation in the two countries' economic relations.

Syria: More on Habibi Meeting With Palestinian Oppositionists

MM2902104096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Habibi Stresses 'Iran's Absolute Support' for Palestinian Opposition Factions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi stressed yesterday the continuation of Iran's absolute support for the Palestinian oppositionists working against the peace agreement between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israel.

This assertion was made during a meeting between Dr. Habibi and a Palestinian delegation comprising the secretaries general of the Palestinian factions opposed to the Oslo agreement, including Dr. George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP]; a representative of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP]; Khalid al-Fahum, leader of the Palestinian National Salvation Front; Ahmad Jibril, leader of the PFLP-General Command; 'Arabi 'Awwad, leader of the Palestinian Communist Party; Musa al-'Alami, Hamas representative; Abu-Musa [Sa'id Musa], leader of Fatah [-the Uprising]; Sami Qandil, representative of al-Sa'iqah; Khalid 'Abd-al-Majid, leader of the Popular Struggle Front; and Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement.

Dr. Mahir al-Tahir, official spokesman for the unified command of the PFLP and the DFLP, said that discussion during Dr. Habibi's meeting with the secretaries general focused on political developments on the Palestinian and Arab scenes and Israeli attempts to eliminate the Palestinian cause. He added that during the meeting Iran stressed its opposition to the agreements signed by Yasir 'Arafat with Israel, stressing its support for the Palestinian people's struggle. The Palestinian spokesman said that the secretaries general of the Palestinian factions expressed their appreciation for Iran's stances and steadfastness "in the face of imperialist pressures."

Meanwhile, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi met with a high-ranking delegation from Lebanese Hizballah, headed by Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah and Husayn al- Musawi, and that he was briefed by the delegation on conditions in southern Lebanon and the party's [Hizballah's] activities.

Habibi stressed Iran's full support for Hizballah and "the legitimacy of its struggle" until the liberation of its territory from Israeli occupation. Habibi also met with an Iraqi opposition delegation in Damascus.

Syria: Habibi Pledges Support to 'Hardline' Palestinian Groups

NC2802132396 Paris AFP in English 1313 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb 28 (AFP) - Iranian Vice President Hassan Habibi met exiled Palestinian opposition leaders in Damascus on Wednesday [28 February] and pledged his country's support for their armed struggle against Israel.

Habibi, making a three-day visit to Syria, Iran's principal Middle East ally, met Damascus-based leaders of hardline groups opposed to the Middle East peace process, an AFP correspondent said.

Among those he held talks with were George Habash, chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and Ahmad Jibril, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine- General Command [PFLP-GC].

Ramadan 'Abdallah Shallah, head of Islamic Jihad, and 'Imad al-'Alami, a senior member of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), were also at the same meeting, the correspondent said.

Jibril told AFP that he had underlined "the wish of the Palestinian people and opposition forces to continue the struggle" against Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

He praised Iran's stance and said the Oslo accords on Palestinian autonomy were "humiliating".

Habibi stressed "Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance fighters who will continue the struggle against the Zionist presence on Palestinian land," Mahir Tahir, a member of the PFLP, said.

The Iranian vice president arrived in Damascus on Tuesday at a time when relations between Iran and Syria have deteriorated since Damascus resumed peace negotiations with Israel in December.

However, both countries insisted on Tuesday that they were committed to maintaining strong ties.

Habibi delayed his visit originally scheduled for early January to protest Syria's support for the United Arab Emirates in a dispute with Iran over three Gulf islands.

The visit was delayed for a second time on Saturday as Habibi was involved in screening candidates for Iran's upcoming legislative elections.

Syria: Iran's Habibi Discusses Support With Hamas Leadership Cadre

LD2902131796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's First Vice President Hasan Habibi last night met and conferred with several senior officials of the political bureau of the Palestine Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

According to a report dispatched by our correspondent from Damascus, during this meeting a member of the Hamas leadership cadre and member of the Hamas's political bureau presented a report on the anti-Zionist resistance in the occupied Palestine and stressed that the anti-Zionist struggle of the Muslims will continue in Palestine and Lebanon. The official also thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its stance to support the Muslims, particularly in connection with the sacred aspiration of Palestine.

Mr. Habibi, for his part, expressed pleasure with the awareness of the Muslims, particularly the Palestinian combatants, and said: The Islamic Republic of Iran will support any Islamic and just movement that seeks to realize its legitimate rights.

Syria: Iran's Habibi Meets With Lebanese Party Officials, Iranians

LD2902135996 Tehran IRNA in English 1322 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 29, IRNA — The visiting Iranian First Vice-President Hasan Habibi met and conferred with the officials of Mo'meneh (Faithful) resistance movement of Lebanon here Thursday.

Habib said at the meeting that all forces loyal to Lebanese Islamic resistance movement should work out a joint program to confront plots hatched by the United States and the Zionist regime.

He added that forces of the Islamic resistance movement currently enjoyed a very strong and specific status in the region.

The meeting was also attended by deputy foreign minister for Arab and African countries Hoseyn Sheykholeslam and Iranian Ambassador to Syria Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi.

Habibi felt assured that a very bright prospect was awaiting the Islamic resistance movement.

The officials of the Lebanese movement thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its support for Lebanese resistance forces, describing cooperation between Iran and the regional states as fundamental and determining for the Arab world and Muslim nations.

In another development, Iranians residing in Syria met the Iranian first vice-president and briefed him on their living condition and problems in Syria.

The Iranians proposed establishment of a friendship association by Iranians in Syria and also of a commercial bureau for trade activities.

Furthermore, they called for the establishment of more Iranian schools in Syria and promotion of educational programs to upgrade the Persian language.

While reviewing problems of the Iranians, Habibi called on them to actively contribute to the implementation of economic probjects in Syria.

He added that legal procedures would be followed up to probe the problems of the Iranians.

Meanwhile, staff of the Iranian organizations in Syria presented reports to Habibi on the activities of their institutions.

Syria: Papers Say Relations With Iran 'Strategic'

JN2802181296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial entitled "Syria and Iran: Strategic Relations," AL-BA'TH says: The strength and firmness of the Syrian-Iranian ties are the result of positions that are based on the common view of Damascus and Tehran on all developments and events in the region. In many aspects, these developments and events aimed to encroach on these positions, which defend right, justice, and the suppressed peoples, who are burdened by the nightmares of the covetous designs against their wealth, resources, and even presence. Since its beginning, the Islamic Republic in Iran has been supporting the people of Palestine. It turned Iran from an ally of Israel to an ally of the Palestinian Arab people, who are resisting occupation and are seeking to regain their identity.

AL-BA'TH notes that coordination and consultation between the political leaders in Syria and Iran were never based on the policy of axes. Instead, this cooperation has always been based on mutual respect and constant improvement of special relations, which aim to serve not only the interests of the two countries, but also the interests of all peoples defending their rights, freedom, and dignity.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Maintaining and improving the ties of cooperation and friendship is sure proof of the extent of their depth and this serves the common view of the two countries.

In a commentary, AL-THAWRAH also discusses the strong relations between Syria and Iran. The paper stresses that Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi's visit to Damascus provides a real and good opportunity to reassess all the topics of common interest and the issues of concern to the two friendly countries. It also provides an opportunity to promote the bilateral ties on the strategic bases on which they are based.

AL-THAWRAH says: The ties of strong friendship between the two countries have since the start of the Islamic Revolution in Iran grown stronger as the two parties started searching for new formulas that can accommodate the great size of relations between them.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that the spirit of keenness to strengthen and develop relations in all fields will help the two countries understand developments with a common view that can overcome all the negative consequences and the major facts related to these developments. Consequently, bilateral relations can continue on the basis of searching for the means to strengthen these ties in a spirit of understanding on the various issues and developments.

The paper adds: Unquestionably, the mutual concern to develop the Syrian-Iranian strategic ties will remain the motive to improve and bolster these ties in all fields, on firm and strong basis, to confront all challenges, surmount all difficulties, and improve the creative cooperation. This makes any wager on the possibility of affecting these ties a losing one.

Syria: Commentary Views Upcoming Maryland Talks, U.S. Role

JN2802175696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1245 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: A new round of Syrian-Israeli negotiations will begin in Maryland today. The convening of this round in the present circumstances surrounding the peace process emphasizes Syria's eagerness to render the peace process successful.

However, all concerned parties should be aware that Syria had agreed to resume the negotiations to seek a just and comprehensive peace and not to waste time. Syria emphasizes the concept of just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and its resolutions because it wants security, stability, and progress for the region.

Peace cannot be imposed by force, because imposed peace is the other face of occupation. He who wants and seeks real peace should believe in just peace, which means land for peace. He should also believe that people do not accept what is imposed on them. Peace cannot last for long unless it is supported by the people and is seen as an embodiment of their interests and does not encroach on their dignity. What happened in Israel during the last few days is the best evidence of this.

The region and its people are eager to have security and stability, but at the same time, they are unable to tolerate the pressure and dictation policy. They believe that an end to this complicated situation is through resorting to international legitimacy.

Syria agreed to participate in the peace process on condition of abidance by, and commitment to Security Council resolutions and the U.S. initiative. It will continue to be committed to the peace process as long as this process remains within the framework of international legitimacy.

It is time for Israel to be aware that what it realized through maneuvers and attempts to circumvent the international legitimacy and through concluding partial agreements does not serve the region and peace. Israel is mistaken if it thinks it is the strongest in the region and that it can impose the peace it wants. Hence, it is clear that the solution is through commitment to international legitimacy and its resolutions. This means full withdrawal from the Golan to the pre-occupation borders and from the whole of southern Lebanon. This is the crux of the international resolutions and one of the pillars of just peace. As for the other pillars, they require acceptance of equal [mutasawiyah] and equitable [mutawaziyah] security arrangements. Any peace that is not based on these principles will be incomplete and lack the faith and support of the people of the region.

Syria hopes that the Maryland negotiations will give positive results that lead to just and comprehensive peace in the region, because these negotiations are sponsored by the United States which is seriously participating in them, and because the United States is a superpower and has an effective role in the international resolutions. The United States is aware of the dimensions of peace in the region and its impact on world peace.

Syria not only urges the United States but the entire international community to respect its resolutions and to play an active role in implementing these resolutions. Respecting the international resolutions is a basic condition not only for peace in the Middle East, but also for world peace and security.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Nangarhar Raises Troops To Stop Outside Intervention

LD2802152496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Anyone from outside Nangarhar attempting to enter the province will face strong resistance. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports from Jalalabad that the important members of the Nangarhar jihadi council under the chairmanship of Haji 'Abdol Qadir, the provincial governor and president of the council, have vowed that they will not allow anyone from outside the province to interfere in its affairs. The Nangarhar jihadi council is in charge of all the province's affairs and enjoys the authority to make decisions due to its respect for national and provincial interests. [sentence as heard] The report says that if anyone from outside Nangarhar intrudes into the province, they will face strong resistance from the council.

The Radio Message of Freedom correspondent says that the Nangarhar council has started to raise a special force to counter any colonial intervention.

Afghanistan: Hezb-e Eslami Commander Killed in Baghlan

LD2802175696 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohammad Nawab Landay, a competent commander of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] faction, has been martyred. In a radio contact, a Hezb-e Eslami source reported to Radio Message of Freedom that recently unidentified assassins waylaid Mohammad Nawab Landay, who was on his way home from the town of Pol-e Khomri. He was martyred at about 1430 hours. The report adds that another person was also killed in the attack. Six people were critically injured during the ambush.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: 'Unruly Mob' Reportedly Stones Indian Mission; Staff Safe

BK2902012496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports from Bangladesh say that the Indian mission in Chittagong was stoned by an unruly mob. The staff members of the mission are reported to be safe. As reported, the police yesterday arrested the mayor of Chittagong, Mr. A.B.M. Muhiuddin Chowdhury in an ongoing crackdown on the opposition parties. This led to rioting in the port city. Two persons were killed in the clashes. The five-day old opposition sponsored noncooperation program ended yesterday.

Bangladesh: Three Killed During Opposition's 'Noncooperation' Program

BK2802155496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The last day of the so-called four and a half days of noncooperation program of opposition parties passed off generally peacefully today, except for some bomb and cracker blasts in the capital. Private buses and vehicles started plying the streets in the morning and the situation became completely normal by noon. The driver of a bus was injured when opposition activists threw a bomb at a minibus at Sat Masjid Street near Kakoli School. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Three persons were killed and 50, including seven policemen, were injured in armed clashes and bomb blasts in Narayanganj and Boraigram in Nator today. The dead include two persons who were killed in armed clashes between political activists in Narayanganj at noon today. Another person was killed while making bombs at a house in Baraigram.

Reports from Chittagong and Rajshahi said that the so-called noncooperation program was observed peacefully in these districts.

Jatiyabadi Srmaik Dal [labor organization of ruling party] held a rally at Shapla Chattar in Dhaka today. Speaking on the occasion, Mir Shaukat Ali, labor and manpower minister, called upon major opposition parties not to announce any more programs for creating chaos and to resolve the problem through negotiations. In this context, he referred to the prime minister's call to resolve the political problem by ending the current chaotic situation.

Police have arrested A.B.M. Muhiuddin Chowdhury, mayor of Chittagong city corporation, at the port city today.

Bangladesh: Troops Open Fire on 'Bomb-Wielding' Activists in Chittagong

BK2902065396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0636 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chittagong, Bangladesh, Feb 29 (AFP) — Paramilitary troops opened fire on bomb-wielding opposition activists here Thursday, killing one and injuring 20, three of them seriously, witnesses and hospital sources said.

The clash in Bangladesh's second city occurred one day after troops were called in to quell rioting sparked by the arrest of Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the central government's crackdown on its opponents.

India

India: 'Nonbailable' Arrest Warrants Issued Against 9 Politicians

BK2902071196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0630 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The special court of Mr. V.B. Gupta today issued nonbailable arrest warrants against nine politicians and others implicated in hawala [illegal money transfer] case. Taking cognizance of the charge-sheet filed against them by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation], the court issued warrants against Mr. L.K. Advani and Yashwant Sinha of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], former union ministers — Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar; Mr. V.C. Shukla; Mr. Madhavrao Scindia; Mr. Kalpanath Rai; and the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Devi Lal; Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan; and Mr. Arjun Singh of the breakaway Congress group. The warrants against Mr. Scindia and Mr. Jakhar are returnable on the 11th of next month while those against Mr. Advani and Mr. Yashwant Sinha are returnable on the next day. In the case of Mr. V.C. Shukla and Mr. Kalpanath Rai, they are returnable on the 13th, and against Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan on the 14th. For Mr. Devi Lal and his grandson Mr. Pradip Singh, the warrants are returnable on the 15th.

The documents filed by the CBI in the court in support of the charge-sheets include Jain diaries, some files, a set of noting pads, and some loose papers on which details about the alleged payments to these politicians are mentioned. The judge also rejected an application moved by Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan requesting the court not to take cognizance of the documents till the Interpol reports on the disbursement of payments are produced before it.

India: Pakistani Troops Reportedly Shoot at Border Locations

BK2802071096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0630 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistani troops resorted to heavy firing on Indian locations in Samba and Ranbirsinghpura sectors of the India-Pakistan international border last night. An official spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that the firing started from the Pakistani post at (Seydanwal), (Nindial), and South Charwaha in Samba sector. It continued for about three hours from about 2100. The firing resumed around 0215 hours and continued till this morning. In Ranbirsinghpura sector, the Pakistani troops started firing from their Chota Chowk picket around 2300 and continued for about 40 minutes. The BSF [Border Security Force] troops retaliated with exchange. There was no casualty or loss on the Indian side. The spokesman added that the apparent aim of the Pakistani firing has been to help the armed militants intrude into the Indian territory.

India: Pakistan Accused of Promoting 'Cross-Border Terrorism'

BK2602161196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has expressed its serious concern at the recent incidents of cross-border terrorism promoted by Pakistan. This was officially conveyed by the External Affairs Ministry to the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi today. New Delhi has also made it clear to Islamabad that India cannot remain unconcerned at these developments.

Delhi Police has busted an arms racket and arrested four persons involved in supplying of arms of Pakistani make. In a raid at Shamli and Kerana towns in Muzaffarnagar District of Uttar Pradesh, they seized incriminating documents besides 196 cartridges, four magazines, and 45 pistols of Pakistani make. An arms dealer has also been arrested.

India: Former Kashmir Chief Accuses Pakistan of Aiding 'Terrorism'

BK2402091696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, has accused Pakistan of aiding and abetting terrorism to destabilize the situation in India. Addressing a public rally in Jammu yesterday, he called upon the people to remain vigilant against the machinations of the antinational elements. Later, talking to newsmen, Dr. Abdullah demanded a high-level enquiry into the allegations that foreign money has been flowing to the country through hawala [illegal money transfer] channels to promote militancy.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has undertaken an ambitious project under centrally sponsored Border Area Development Program to improve the health care facilities in the state. The state secretary for health and medical education, Mr. A.K. Angurana, said in Jammu that under it, health institutions will be equipped with latest diagnostic apparatus, life saving drugs, and ambulances. An amount of 1.35 crore rupees is being spent in the state under phase-three of the program by the end of the current financial year; 2.67 crore rupees have already been spent in the first two phases.

India: Editorial Faults U.S. for Supplying Arms to Pakistan

BK2802154896 Calcutta ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 20 Feb 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Pakistan and U.S. Weapons"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan is again facing some difficulties in obtaining the most sophisticated weapons it had purchased from the United States. This is because of a report by the U.S. intelligence agency, CIA. The report submitted to the Clinton administration alleged that Pakistan has acquired nuclear weapons technology from China. As the U.S. Government is committed to the worldwide nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, the report has caused inconvenience for the U.S. Administration as well.

The U.S. Government wants to punish any nuclear country whenever it transfers nuclear technology to a nonnuclear state. In this case, both the supplying and receiving countries are friends of the United States. This is why it is difficult for the United States to punish either of them. The United States cannot, however, totally ignore China's violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]; nor can it remain idle without scolding Pakistan for receiving this technology. By doing so, the United States would only be contradicting itself. This is the opinion expressed by some quarters in the U.S. Congress. It has created difficulties for Pakistan.

It is true that nonnuclear countries will always strive to acquire nuclear capability, and it is not unnatural for Pakistan to strive for this technology. When a nuclear state like China transfers nuclear technology to Pakistan, however, it simply constitutes a violation of the NPT, of which China itself is a signatory. In this case, China is supposed to receive "punishment." The United States, however, cannot afford to annoy China; nor can it take a step like an "economic blockade" against it. China consumes $12 billion worth of U.S. goods annually. A huge amount of U.S. funds and technology has also been invested and transferred into China. It is U.S. investors and businessmen who will not allow the Clinton administration to take any action against China.

In Pakistan's case, there is no such pressure by businessmen and industrialists, though many U.S. senators still believe in the strategic importance of Pakistan and consider friendship with Pakistan to be consistent with U.S. interests. It was due mainly to their efforts that the Pressler Amendment was waived at least once and the approval was made through the Brown Amendment for the supply of $360 million worth of U.S. arms to Pakistan.

The intelligence report on Pakistan acquiring nuclear technology from China has somewhat damaged that decision. Both Pakistani Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali and Maleeha Lodhi, ambassador to the United States, have acknowledged that the CIA report would create new problems in receiving U.S. weapons.

Eventually, however, the problem will end. The pro-Pakistan senators who, even after the end of the Cold War and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, consider friendship with Pakistan as consistent with U.S. political interests and who try to disintegrate India—the major power in the subcontinent—will continue to harp on their logic and will support the U.S. arming of Pakistan. Simultaneously, they will also try to intimidate India to dissuade it from developing its own missile technology, which is so indispensable. India has not bowed to these threats thus far.

It has also rejected as baseless and sinister propaganda the fabricated reports that India is stockpiling nuclear weapons or preparing for a nuclear test. The rejection of these reports, however, does not mean that India should not make any preparations to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, despite Pakistan's buildup of conventional and nuclear weapons and the participation of the United States and China in this buildup. Though unfortunate, it is true that Pakistan's buildup will trigger an arms race on the subcontinent. India will be forced to curtail expenditures in its development sector because it will have to increase spending on defense.

Despite being the most credible champion of global disarmament, India is forced to think of enhancing its defense preparations. This has resulted from the arms buildup of its neighbors and the United States—the most alert watchdog of the NPT—joining in this buildup. There is no doubt that India will be the one to suffer the consequences of a wholehearted arms buildup by a neighbor with which India has had to fight three full-fledged wars.

India: Ministers Give Briefing on Arms 'Dumped' by Pakistan, Border Firing

BK2902102696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The center has asked the state governments to take measures to unearth the explosives and arms dumped by the Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI [Inter Service Intelligence], in view of the coming general elections. Answering supplementaries in the Lok Sabha today, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said the center is prepared to assist the state governments in this regard. He said India is pursuing at the diplomatic level to convince the United States to declare Pakistan a state sponsoring terrorism. On illegal immigrants, Mr. Chavan said the states have been asked to identify foreigners staying without proper papers.

Replying to the main question, the minister of state for home, Professor Kamson, said antiterrorist cells have been formed in every police district in the capital, and vigilance has been increased in vulnerable areas like airports and railway stations. Information regarding terrorist hideouts and their sympathizers is constantly being updated by the Delhi Police.

The government today told the Rajya Sabha that unprovoked firing by Pakistan along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir has become a recurring phenomenon. The minister of state for defense, Mr. Mallikarjun, told the house in a written reply that Pakistani troops also resorted to firing rockets, mortars, and small arms from across the border since the beginning of this year as well as in the previous year. He said these resulted in casualties to the army and BSF [Border Security Force] personnel. He said a befitting reply was given by the Indian troops in all incidents of firing. The minister said our response [was] to ensure that such incidents remained localized but effective, and there is no unnecessary escalation, and our casualties are minimized.

India: Scientific Adviser: Army May Induct 'Nag' Missile in '98

BK2602072696 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 24 Feb 96 p 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The third generation indigenously developed anti-tank 'Nag' missile is likely to be inducted into the Indian Army around 1998, according to Dr Abdul Kalam, scientific advisor to the Prime Minister.

The laser-guided 'fire and forget' Nag missiles, which are rated to be best in the world, would be given to the Indian army for user trials during 1996-97, he said during a chat with reporters here today after inaugurating the national India's missile development programme and the scientific adviser to workshop on fomas '96.

Dr Kalam said India's missile programme is progressing well. He, however, refused to elaborate.

The concept of force multiplier would remain a distant dream if a research in the development of armament system was not undertaken, he said. The workshop is being attended by scientists from various Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) laboratories.

He said looking to the period 2000-2030 in the next century, force multiplier would be of utmost importance in the event of a war. The developed western nations would not transfer the most advanced technology under the garb of missile technology control regime (MTCR). The scientific community in the country should vigorously undertake their own research, he added.

Stating that electronic warfare system, missiles systems, communication system, the unmanned vehicles and early warning system constitute the force multipliers, Dr Kalam called upon the scientific community to enter into the software engineering and low observable technology since during the period 2000-2030 into the next century, new systems would emerge at international level.

"Let us get away from what others are doing and set our own example by entering into the arena of software engineering since we have the technology," Dr Kalam exhorted the scientists and researchers.

On the lines of different research centres, an armament research board is being set up and the Government is expected to approve the establishment in a couple of months, Dr Kalam said adding that objective of the new board would be to promote research in armament technology with the involvement of scientists, engineers, researchers and academicians.

Costs and schedules are the areas where India has always been beaten, he said and added that this could be overcome with the vast knowledge base.

India: Naresh Chandra Appointed Ambassador to U.S.

BK2402161496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Naresh Chandra, presently the governor of Gujarat, has been appointed India's ambassador to the United States. Following this, Mr. Naresh Chandra resigned from governorship. The president has accepted the resignation of Mr. Naresh Chandra as the Gujarat governor. A Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House] communique issued today said Mr. Naresh Chandra will continue to hold the charge of the governor of Gujarat till the appointment of a successor.

India: ROK's President Asks Delhi To Liberalize Financial Sector

BK2802111096 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 27 Feb 96 p 17

[FBIS Transcribed Text] South Korean President Kim Yong-Sam on Monday asked India to liberalise its financial sector and provide tax benefits for investors from his country and predicted Korean investment to touch $5 billion in value terms by 2000. Mr Kim, who is heading a 48 member business delegation comprising the chief executive officers of some of the international renowned companies, said even though two-way trade between China and Korea has touched $20 billion, efforts were on to develop trade with India.

The Korean president was addressing a meeting organised by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi. "I firmly believe that India will become a central player in the world economy in the early 21st century" he said. Mr Kim said Korean business houses were already the largest investors in the Indian automobile industry. Mr Kim said the two countries will have to upgrade their partnership to a higher level and work for the common prosperity of a new Pacific and Indian ocean region. Mr Kim said that business which possess high-level technology and competitive power will provide good opportunities for partnership.

Both Korea and India will have to make joint efforts to promote free trade that will create jobs in Asian countries and help in eliminating poverty. The two countries will have to take the lead for broad market opening, liberalisation of investment and freer transfer of technology through bold relaxation of restrictions, he said.

"If India's high-level basic science is combined with South Korea's manufacturing technology and India's abundant natural and labour resources combined with South Korea's management ability, we could increase our common profits," he said.

India: Verma Unanimously Elected New Delhi Chief Minister

BK2402143896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Sahib Singh Verma has been unanimously elected the leader of the Delhi BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] legislature party. The outgoing chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, proposed his name at the party meeting this afternoon. Later, Mr. Sahib Singh Verma along with Mr. Khurana and the Delhi unit party chief, Mr. Kedarnath Sahni, drove to the Raj Nivas [residence of Lieutenant Governor] to inform the lieutenant governor, Mr. P.K. Dave, of the decision of the legislative party. The party's parliamentary board last night approved Mr. Verma's name for the chief ministership of the national capital territory of Delhi. Mr. Khurana resigned on Thursday after the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] sought permission from the president to prosecute him in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case.

India: Economic Survey Favors Continued Reforms To Sustain Growth

BK2702135796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The economic survey says that the strong economic performance in recent years can be sustained by continuing reforms in the key sectors of the economy. The survey, which was presented in both houses of Parliament today, said that difficult decisions have to be taken to deal with the emerging new challenges to have high growth rate and low rate of inflation. The survey predicts a moderate inflation rate if the monsoon turns out to be favorable next year.

Making a strong case to curb budgetary deficit, the survey says there is an urgent need to check low priority expenditure by the government. It also calls for further reduction in direct taxes, simplification and elimination of exemptions and reductions. The survey has called for concerted efforts for a unified value-added tax system, VAT.

About agriculture, it says Indian agriculture is beginning to appear globally competitive.

On industry, the survey says further reforms are needed to encourage greater flexibility and mobility of resources of land, labor, and capital within the industry. Stressing the need for transparency, the survey says well-defined and open bidding are needed for giving licenses.

India: Daily Reports on Samsung's $630 Million Investment Plan

BK2802101596 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 27 Feb 96 p 15

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Samsung Electronics Co (SEC) has decided to establish a wholly-owned holding company in India that will spearhead a $630 million production and sales operation covering colour picture tubes, electric and electronic parts as well as finished consumer electronics products.

Mr Jin-Ku Kang, chairman of SEC, announced here today that the company had applied for the Indian government's permission to make large-scale investments in the country and this move comes on the heels of receiving that permission.

Of the total planned investment of $630 million, SEC will put in $200 million. The remaining $430 million will be raised among joint venture partners and banks.

The holding company, which will be established during 1996 will eventually produce and market colour TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, microwave ovens, PABX [private automatic branch exchange], paging systems, TDX [time division exchange], other telecommunication systems, pagers, keyphone, cellular phones, facsimile machines, monitors, personal computers, colour picture tubes, tuners and other electronic parts and components.

The Indian electronics market is growing at least 15 per cent annually and is expected to be about $27 billion, the same scale as the current annual Chinese market, by 2005. SEC is hoping to figure among the top three electronics company in India in this time period. The company expects its annual sales to be $700 million in the year 2000 and to reach $1.5 billion by 2005.

In the first stage (to the end of this year), the holding company and a new software development centre will be established and the foundation for expanded investment will be in place. In its second stage, the company will steadily expand into the production of consumer electronics products, information systems hardware and parts before passing on to the third stage by the year 2000 when it plans to have a unified strategic operation.

SEC founded a local sales and production subsidiary, Samsung India Electronics Ltd (SIEL) in India last year, and the company is now in full operation.

Iran

Iran: Tehran Sees Asia-Europe Meeting as Challenge to U.S.

NC2902094196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 29 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] News agencies report that the first European Union-Asia summit will be held tomorrow in the Thai capital, Bangkok. Tomorrow's meeting will be attended by the heads of 15 European Union members and of 10 Asian countries, including seven members of the ASEAN and Japan, China, and South Korea. The major topics to be discussed are trade relations, increased investment and the expansion of economic relations, security issues, and political relations between the two regions.

Political and economic observers believe that with this conference, Asia and Europe will enter a new phase in their relations and will hold discussions on trade relations on an equal basis.

The Bangkok conference is being held at a time when ASEAN members, as its initiators, are witnessing major changes in their economic structures, especially when these countries have recently tried—through their organized coordination to free the region of nuclear weapons—to convey the clear message to the world that the ASEAN seeks a special place in international politics and trade. By holding a joint session with Europe, the members of ASEAN, which has a $540-billion share in world trade, have tacitly challenged their former ally, America, to economic competition. That tomorrow's conference includes Asia's three superior economic powers—Japan, China, and South Korea—is a show of this region's economic potential—vis-a-vis America's efforts—to form an economic and international union.

This is significant in that Asia has now turned into a new pole for the world economy. By stressing their interests more each day the countries in this region are further expressing their wish to struggle against America's policies in the Pacific. The truth is that this struggle not only paves the way for changes in Asia and the Pacific, but helps regional countries clarify Asia's position internationally.

The proposal by the eastern Asian countries for a joint conference with Europe and the expansion of this region's economic-political relations constitute the undeniable reality that these countries seek to become more efficient in their efforts to create a new atmosphere without America's hegemonistic presence. Assessing these efforts next to intensifying and overt anti-American efforts by the regional countries reveals their significance.

Iran: U.S., NATO Stances on Bosnia Criticized

NC2902112096 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "America: Overt Blackmail in Bosnia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Thursday [15 February] American forces raided a training center of the Bosnian Interior Ministry and took people at the Bosnian national police headquarters hostage. American and NATO officials immediately resorted to a coordinated propaganda effort, alleging that this was a clandestine center for training terrorists. The U.S. Department of State went even further in its impudence and blatantly stated that it had received disturbing reports that Bosnian officials were involved in the activities of this terrorist-training center near Sarajevo.

Reacting immediately, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic stated that this was a training center for the Bosnian national police, which operate under the Bosnian Interior Ministry, and that its activities are legal. The Bosnian president's remarks clearly show there is nothing to hide that might encourage NATO to claim that it has discovered such a center. But Bosnian officials say the propaganda is designed to pressure the Bosnian Government. Stressing that there is nothing to hide in all this, the Bosnian Foreign Ministry has questioned America's and NATO's behavior, asking: How can America make such a commotion about people in a Bosnian training center yet neglect to mention that it trains thousands of Serbs and Croats?

The truth is that the root of all this propaganda and commotion should be sought in America's inhuman objectives. America wants no one but the American forces to have "the initiative of action" in Bosnia and wants no one to catch them "red-handed." This is why it wants to create the necessary propaganda atmosphere so that it can place everyone else, even the Bosnian Government, in a "position of inaction" and in defensive mode.

Apparently the American forces have been directing the issue from the start. They are directing Bosnian events in the direction they want. This is a type of overt intervention in Bosnia's domestic affairs. And it is not very clear what will happen if it continues.

The astonishing thing is America's impudence toward the Bosnian Government, which it has accused of collaborating to train terrorists on Bosnian soil. The question America should be asked is: When the oppressed Bosnian people were "being cut down" like flies by the savage Serbs, where were America and its allies in NATO? In those days, and even now, did America and NATO not display their double standards, support the savage Serbs, and make the oppressed in this crime the victims of "double oppression?"

Everyone knows that support for the oppressed in Bosnia and efforts to train the people and national forces in this newly independent republic to defend Muslim respect is not terrorism, but is precisely defense and support for the oppressed. The feather in Iran's cap is that at the most sensitive moments, when the oppressed people of Bosnia were left alone facing the Serb executioner and criminals, it supported the oppressed Bosnians in every way and did its best to perform its duties.

No one has forgotten that at the peak of the oppression in Bosnia, when pressure was coming from every direction to tighten the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims and when America and the other Western countries, particularly Britain and France, were doing their best to collaborate with the savage Serbs, it was Islamic Iran that strived in every way to prevent the criminal Serbs from succeeding.

Richard Holbrooke, an element of American espionage who has apparently named himself a "mediator," was interviewed by the German weekly publication FOCUS recently and called for severing Bosnia's relations with Iran. Such demands primarily show the depth of America's spite against Iran and show the extent of America's rage and aversion toward Muslim solidarity. They also show that the Americans and their allies in Bosnia do not want Bosnia to score even the success it has scored thus far, but want it to surrender to the Serbs and the Croats.

We know this. Murmurs about the remainder of Bosnia being gobbled up by the Serbs and the Croats are being heard in Europe. Under such conditions America wants not a single friend from the Islamic countries left in Bosnia; that way Bosnia can be gobbled up next.

If military training is wrong, why has America included it as one of the paragraphs of the Dayton accord and assigned its forces this task? This shows that Washington is pursuing filthy objectives and that, by starting such propaganda on the eve of the Bosnian-Croatian-Serb summit in Rome, it is trying to place the Muslims in a position of inaction so that it can blackmail them with the hope that the Muslim front at the Rome conference will be defensive and grant Washington the concessions it wants. This is the only logical explanation for America resorting to such disgraceful hooliganism to pursue its objectives.

Iran: Paper Criticizes U.S., Israeli Stands on Syria

NC2902081396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 19 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Satan's Black List"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The new round in America's propaganda war against Syria started after the defeat of the compromise talks with the Zionist regime and America's failure to force Syrian officials to surrender to Zionist demands. The focus of this propaganda is to reinclude Syria on the black list of terrorists. Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has said in reaction to this: "We will not surrender to those people who resort to deceitful slogans and who are only seeking to blackmail others because these people are pursuing their specific objectives under the guise of democracy. Whoever defends his honor and land is considered a terrorist by the Westerners."

These remarks are a sign of change in the Syrian officials' stances, which is linked to the extent of their understanding of the depth of American and world Zionist plots. The Syrian officials were expected to come to this realization much sooner than this. This is exactly what the Islamic Republic of Iran has been saying for years, and it is on this basis that it accepts no other stand but the annihilation of the Zionist regime in the region.

Although the Syrian Government has not come forward with such an uncompromising stand and has taken steps toward compromise, America and the Zionists are not satisfied even with this. They did not expect Syria to change its stand after the homage paid by 'Arafat and King Husayn of Jordan and to refuse to fully bow down in front of the Zionist occupiers. Before this, Israeli and American officials had used peaceful words to refer to Syria as a trustworthy partner in peace. But after they felt that Syria would not show the necessary flexibility toward the Zionists' blackmail and that the compromise talks had failed, suddenly America and the regime occupying Palestine changed their tone. This time Syria suddenly changed from a trustworthy partner in peace into a dangerous terrorist who does not spare any effort to use terrorism and to train terrorists. It is very clear that Syria's policy in this short period has not changed; and it is not as though the Americans and the Zionists have suddenly made a great discovery on the basis of which they are accusing Syria of terrorism. But a look at the record of American and Zionist behavior vis-a-vis other countries shows that Syria is not the only case and that whenever America and the Zionists have faced an impasse in their propaganda and have "fallen short," they have suddenly started a propaganda bombardment against the other side. They put pressure on it hoping that they can achieve their hegemonistic objectives and break the stalemate in the talks by resorting to psychological war and the tattered weapon of terrorism.

The issue is very clear. Anyone who wants to defend his respect and his land is considered a culprit in the eyes of the Zionist occupiers and their impudent American mentors. And it is precisely because of this that Syria has been the target of various accusations and America has once again included Damascus on its "black list." Of course, everyone knows that America's black list is yet another disgraceful propaganda game to inflict more pressure. But this idiotic game has been repeated so many times that it can no longer fool everyone.

Who does not know that the Zionists are the symbol of unrestrained terrorism and have been able to continue the occupation of the Islamic land of Palestine by resorting to various means of terror and intimidation? Who does not know that America is the manifestation of state terrorism and that it justifies all the crimes and intimidations that it resorts to in every corner of the world within the framework of its hegemonistic policies?

Zionism—as the illegitimate child of the black colonialism of the West—is more disgraceful than to be able to hide itself under such slogans. Terrorism has been considered for several decades and even today to be the most major pivot of American and Zionist policy.

Under such conditions, accusing countries of terrorism that want to have an independent policy will not change anything and cannot hide the ugly face of America and the Zionist occupiers.

Iran: Commentary on Farrakhan's Visit to Iran, U.S. Reaction

NC2902105796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Feb 96 p 16

[Political commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Louis Farrakhan, leader of the black American Muslims, has described the people and revolution of Iran as the true missionaries of God to the people of the world. In his visit to Iran this week, he stated that American Muslims are enamored with the Islamic Revolution and that the pattern of Iran's Islamic rule is fully based on Koranic teachings. Farrakhan represented a very large number of American Muslims among a people whose initial objective is to fight world arrogance, especially American. But, Nicholas Burns—spokesman for America's diplomacy— thinks otherwise. A statement by the U.S. Department of State is both rooted in longlasting hostilities and is influenced by world reaction to the black American leader's support for revolutionary Iran. While condemning Farrakhan's presence among the Iranian people, Burns described the Muslim and revolutionary Iranian nation as terrorists!

This arrogant stand is being adopted at a time when the CIA is allocating a $20-million fund for spying on, pressuring, and attempting to overthrow Iran's Government. This is one of the most overt examples of state terrorism in the world.

Meanwhile, America is witnessing the revival of Islamic life within itself. Students and Muslim foreign nationals are the vanguards of this awakening. The blacks are being inspired by what they have learned from the Islamic Revolution in Iran for their own struggle against racism. The largest demonstration by blacks in the history of America stirred up fear that the Iranian pattern was being followed, and Farrakhan's current visits to the source of anti-arrogant and anti-racist movements have further intensified this concern.

The remarks by the U.S. Department of State spokesman clearly show the U.S. Government's rage against the revolutionary Iranian nation. Before this, White House officials tried to display their opposition against the Iranian Government and not against the Iranian nation. But now, the curtains have been cast aside and they have taken a stand against the nation. What is the reason for this rage?

This week the world witnessed the Iranian people's powerful presence in defending Islamic aspirations and confronting arrogant ploys on two occasions. Sunday was the day for the renewal of allegiance to the Islamic Revolution of 22 Bahman 1357 [11 February 1979]. And the following day was Jerusalem Day, a day for renewing allegiance to the Palestinian aspiration and to holy Jerusalem. The anniversary of the revolution on 11 February is an example of resistance by the oppressed of the world against oppressors, arrogance, and colonialism. And Jerusalem Day is a show of defense for Islamic aspirations that have been sacrificed by collusion between arrogance and the self-appointed and illegitimate representatives of Palestine. Undoubtedly, the White House's rage stems from the fact that the Iranian nation is the vanguard of these processes that are against arrogance and dependence. The word terrorist is used to describe those countries that have themselves risen to confront terrorism. If Washington thinks that by using such a weapon it can obstruct such genuine movements, it has been mistaken in its decisions on foreign policy. Why don't these politicians learn from their past failures?

Iran: Canada Hailed for Not Bowing to U.S. Trade Pressure

LD2702221796 Tehran IRNA in English
1922 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 27 (IRNA) — Chairman of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Khamoushi [name as received] told a meeting of members of the Iran-Canada Chamber of Commerce here Tuesday [27 February] that the United States had always been trying to sabotage Iran-Canada relations.

He said Washington had exerted a lot of pressure on that country despite which Canada had maintained its independence and also insisted on further broadening relations with Iran, adding that Canada is one of Iran's greatest trade partners.

Khamoushi said Mexico, too, was interested to further relations with Iran, despite the preference of the United States.

The Iranian official said that Iran's Chamber of Industries would do everything possible to further relations with those countries.

Iran: RESALAT on Anti-Iranian Demonstrations in Turkey

NC2802213296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
14 Feb 96 p 20

[Political commentary: "The First Costs of Gingrich's Plan in Turkey?!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Simultaneous with ceremonies throughout the world marking the 18th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, elements of the Monafeqin [hypocrites—pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] minigroup resorted to some unprincipled attempts against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The fact is that the more a government ignores insults to Islamic Iran's principles and values, the more active this minigroup are in that country. Turkey, our northwestern neighbor, has offered the most extensive services to one of the most significant terrorist minigroups in the world, which has several thousand pages in its black record!

In conjunction with this attempt, some pro-Western mass media in Ankara have also intensified their negative propaganda and have come out against the Islamic Revolution and the political, economic, and cultural situation in this country 17 years after this revolution. [passage omitted]

Unfortunately, once again Ankara has turned to abroad in order to solve its crises at home. It is the first time that the monafeqin have received permission from the Turkish Government to stage their unprincipled demonstrations; and it seems that the first part of the $20 million fund allocated by the CIA for spying and coup attempts against Iran have been used in Turkey.

This is tantamount to the violation of the primary rights of a nation and collaboration with an aggressor from outside the region. Apparently acting Turkish Prime Minister Ciller wants to compensate for the biggest defeat ever suffered by the secularist right wing by turning elsewhere.

But Ankara, which is getting accustomed to insulting the inviolability of the borders and the values of its neighbors, should bear in mind the fact that if bad conduct instead of goodneighborly relations rule the ties between neighbors, Ankara will be the one to suffer most. Turkey's eastern borders are extremely tense because of the activities of the Kurdish Workers' Party in areas neighboring Iran and Iraq. However, nothing has been done to interfere in the affairs of Ciller's former and current governments. Today, after

Iraq, Turkey has the greatest number of Achilles' heels among the regional countries. Therefore, if Ankara's politicians have sufficient foresight, they should be more cautious toward their neighbors. But in the last days of her political life, Ciller has sacrificed this for the White House's empty promises.

Iran: Daily Cites AFP on Riot Police Raids in Bahrain

NC2802163596 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 17 Feb 96 p 16

[Central News Unit Report from Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night, Bahraini riot police raided a gathering of Shiites in Manama in celebration of Laylatul-Qadr [the Night of Power, when the Koran was first revealed].

According to AFP, law enforcement authorities used teargas to disperse Muslims congregated at the Al-Qassab Theological Center, the largest Shiite religious center, and the Al-Mo'min mosque.

Official sources did not report this news.

Following demonstrations by Shiite opponents since last December, Bahraini officials have advised prominent Shiite clerics not to make political speeches in mosques.

On the other hand, a German citizen resident in Bahrain told AFP: Despite reassuring remarks by Bahraini officials, I am afraid of venturing out at night as I am terrified that Westerners will be the target of this violence.

It is worth mentioning that the Embassies of the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands have issued warnings to their citizens here following the recent increase in explosions.

An American airline pilot who has regular flights to Bahrain said: Westerners do not feel safe in Bahrain and western embassies have asked their citizens to move in groups.

Iran: Daily Says Damascus Ties 'Indispensable' to Islamic Movement

LD2902110596 Tehran IRNA in English 1037 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 29, IRNA — Tehran-Damascus close and brotherly ties is not only inevitable for the two countries sharing similar values, but indispensable to the success of the Islamic movement in the region as well, said the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Thursday.

Commenting on the current visit to Damascus of Iran's First Vice- President Hasan Habibi, the editorial said both countries stressed alliance between the two countries and campaign against the Zionist regime.

"The strength of the alliance is such that, although Yasir 'Arafat has been reduced to an Israeli surrogate, the anti-Zionist Islamic movement marches on without showing the slightest weakening," it said.

Stressing that both countries value their close cooperation, it said they are committed to preserve it till the victory of the Islamic movement.

Emphasizing that the Palestinian cause is sacred for all Muslims around the world, the paper said it would be a historical blunder for countries to subordinate it to political expediency.

The paper added that Iran and Syria would not compromise on their solidarity in support of the Palestinian cause.

"As Israel becomes more and more entrenched in compromises with naive Arab countries in the region, Iran-Syrian close relations will undergo more tests to their enduring solidarity," it said.

Referring to the postponement of Habibi's visit to Damascus a couple of weeks ago which was taken advantage by the Western media, the paper said although a bit delayed, the visit "not only disappointed the United States but proved once again that the friendship of strategic allies is not one that can easily be destroyed at the slightest opportunity."

Iran: Rafsanjani Agrees To Transport Kazakh Caspian Sea Oil

LD2802133896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Nurlan Balgymbayev, the Kazakh oil minister, has met our country's president and submitted a written message from President Nursultan Nazarbayev, that country's president. Expressing his country's interest in expanding economic and commercial ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of oil in the Caspian Sea, he asked for the Islamic Republic of Iran's cooperation on the export of Kazakh oil to international markets.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, welcomed Kazakhstan's proposal to export its oil via Iran and, referring to our country's existing resources for transferring Kazakh oil from the shores of the Caspian Sea to our country's southern ports, he added: The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with Kazakhstan on the export of its oil in view of Iran's aim of strengthening the economic independence of neighboring countries, including Kazakhstan.

Iran: Aqazadeh Holds Talks With Visiting Yemeni Counterpart

*LD2702160796 Tehran IRNA in English
1557 GMT 27 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — Visiting Yemeni Deputy Premier and Minister of Petroleum and Minerals Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar expressed hope here Monday that his government would benefit from Iranian expertise in modernizing oil industries in his country. In his meeting with Iranian minister of oil, Gholam Reza Aqazadeh here Monday he said his government looked forward to having cooperation with Iran in oil exploration and developing refineries.

Aqazadeh welcomed the offer made by the visiting Yemeni official and said that such cooperation would further consolidate existing relations between the two Muslim nations. The Yemeni official, leading a high level delegation, is here for talks on the bilateral ties.

Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Meets With Yemeni Oil Minister

LD2802135696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting this morning with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Sa'id al-'Attar, the Yemeni minister of industry, oil, and mineral resources and deputy prime minister, described as eye-catching and immense Iran's development and achievements in recent years. He said: In view of Islamic Republic of Iran's valuable experiences in gas and oil industries, Yemen is interested, by forming a joint committee, to make use of Iran's participation in the reconstruction of Aden's refinery and expand the two countries' cooperation in the fields exploration and refinement of crude oil.

The Yemeni minister referred to potentials of the Islamic countries in meeting their technical and industrial requirements among each others and expressed regret over the lack of cooperation among these countries. He added: At a time when Islam is emphasizing the consolidation of solidarity and brotherhood among the Islamic countries, however, the volume of trade exchanges among the Islamic countries are very insignificant.

Rafsanjani said that after the Islamic revolution, Iran's policy has been to reduce dependency on external sources through emphasizing the policy of self-sufficiency and relying on internal sources, possibilities and expert manpower, which could be a successful example for other Islamic countries and the third world. He said: With an aim to help Islamic and friendly countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the potential to participate in industrial, oil, and economic projects with these countries and offer conditions and costs much more reasonable than that of Western countries.

Iran: Yemeni Oil Minister Seeks Iranian 'Expertise'

LD2802144996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Sa'id al-'Attar, deputy prime minister and minister of industries, oil, and mineral resources of the Republic of Yemen, this morning met Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mr. Nateq-Nuri, the speaker of the Islamic Majles.

Mr. al-'Attar emphasized the need for expansion of all-round ties between Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran and said that his country wants to make use of the experiences and expertize of Iran in various oil and industrial spheres.

He also referred to next year's parliamentary elections in Yemen, and said: We know very well that Iran has long experience with regard to implementation of democracy and parliamentary elections; therefore, we would like to benefit from your experiences.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri said that the priority of Iran's foreign policy is to expand ties with Islamic countries. He expressed our country's readiness to cooperate with Yemen in oil, industries, and agriculture spheres.

Referring to the threat of Israel's influence in the region, Mr. Nateq-Nuri said that Israel intends to infilrate the world energy center, that is, the Persian Gulf region, through careful planning, and we have always warned our Arab friends about the threat of influence and domination of the Zionist regime to this sensitive region.

Iran: French Minister on Relations Between Tehran, Paris

*LD2502160896 Tehran IRNA in English
1544 GMT 25 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — France's Minister of Public Works, Transport and Tourism, Bernard Pons said here on Sunday French officials are satisfied with Tehran-Paris relations in terms of bilateral cooperation and within the framework of the European Union (EU).

In a meeting with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Pons expressed pleasure with his visit to Tehran and conveyed the greetings of French Prime Minister, Alain

Juppe and French Foreign Minister, Herve De Charette to Iranian officials.

Pons said cooperation between Iran and France is at an excellent level and should be further developed. He said the French Government has welcomed Iranian decision to expand cultural relations between the two countries especially the promotion of Persian language in France.

He termed the forthcoming inauguration of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway as a very important event and voiced his country's readiness for regional cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Velayati in reply referred to the historical background of Tehran-Paris relations and said constructive cooperation is underway between the two countries and there is a bright future awaiting bilateral ties.

He said on the basis of the two countries' political will, new foundations should be laid for long-term cooperation between the two countries.

Velayati said cooperation between Iran and France is historical in scientific and cultural areas and hoped that the two sides would take effective steps to promote French and Persian languages in either country.

The two ministers exchanged views on the progress of Iranian cooperation with the European Union (EU) as well as with France.

Iran: Majles Speaker, French Transport Minister View Relations

LD2502174996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Bernard Pons, the French minister for infrastructure, housing, transport, and tourism, this afternoon met Mr. 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, speaker of the Islamic Majles.

Expressing pleasure about his visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Pons stressed the willingness of the French Government and people to strengthen and expand relations between the two countries. He added: Today the French Government, headed by the president himself, is in favor of establishing good ties with Iran. He said it was not our responsibility if a number of countries like or dislike our ties with Iran. What matters to the French Government is the fact that we are fully in favor of expansion of ties with Iran.

Mr. Pons also said that the two countries' parliamentary groups should become more active.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri described as historical the ties between Iran and France and welcomed visits by the two countries' authorities, which contributes to expansion of bilateral ties. He said: Today ground is well prepared for expansion of bilateral ties and certainly America will not be happy about this fact, for America unlawfully wants to portray itself as a greater country and the master [Persian: agha] of the world.

The speaker of the Islamic Majles emphasized the willingness of Iran to expand ties with the European community.

Iran: Roads Minister Receives French Counterpart

LD2602161696 Tehran IRNA in English 1417 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Visiting French Minister of Public Works, Transport and Tourism Bernard Pons and Iranian Roads and Transport Minister Akbar Torkan here Monday underlined the need to expand Tehran-Paris technical and scientific cooperation.

Torkan enumerating Iran's capabilities in areas of airplane building and manufacture of inftrastructural equipment for air, marine and railway transportation.

Moreover, he briefed Pons on projects under implementation in the area of development.

Pons for his part underlined Iran's important role in the region and announced France's readiness to cooperate with Iran in implementing projects in the areas of aviation industry, railway, petrochemical, subway and port equipment.

The French minister welcomed despatch of Iranian experts to France to undergo special training courses.

He termed as "favourable and praiseworthy" Iran's performance as regard repayment of its foreign obligations on time and underlined that the new avenues should be explored for mutual cooperation.

The two sides are expected to conclude an agreement tonight on mutual cooperation in the area of transportation.

Iran: President, French Transport Minister View Expanding Ties

LD2602183896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting today with President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Bernard Pons, the French minister for infrastructure, housing, transport and tourism, said: Paris political will is to expand ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and independently deepen bilateral cooperation.

President Hashemi-Rafasanjani referred to good historical and cultural ties between Iran and France and added: Good hospitality paid by France to the late Imam [Khomeyni], the decision by French TOTAL company to cooperate in oil spheres with Iran, and French principled policy with regard to the U.S. Congress decision against Iran has created favorable ground for expansion of bilateral ties.

Referring to Iran's economic development and growth in various spheres and the high capability of Iranian experts, the president added that Iran was welcoming expansion of ties with the European countries, including France.

The president also condemned America's monopoly-seeking [Persian: enhesar telabi] policy in the various parts of the world and said: Iran welcomes expansion of ties and cooperation with the European countries by fully adhering to international norms and standards.

Iran: Culture Minister, French Minister Discuss Cooperation

LD2602220596 Tehran IRNA in English
2144 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — French minister of public works, transport and tourism, Bernard Pons, and his delegation conferred with Iran's minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Mostafa Mirsalim here on Monday.

The Iranian minister said called for identifying and strengthening of grounds for expansion of cultural cooperation between the two countries.

He said Iran and France enjoy cultural ties dating back to the dominance of French language in modern Iran before English took its place.

Mirsalim stressed on tourism and said there are extensive grounds for cultural cooperation between the two countries.

The French minister expressed his country's interest in deepening cultural and tourism relations with Iran.

He called for sending of experts to survey hoteling, holding of exhibitions, and identifying the tourist potential in the cultural and religious spheres.

Iran: Iran, France Sign Transportation Agreement

LD2702095596 Tehran IRNA in English
0736 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — Iran and France signed an agreement for international land transportation here last night. The agreement was signed by the visiting French Minister of Public Works, Transport and Tourism, Bernard Pons, and Iranian Minister of Roads and Transport, Akbar Torkan.

The agreement calls for expansion of bilateral technical cooperation in building Tehran-Qom-Esfahan express train line and improving the fleet of the Iranian railway. Iran and France have also agreed to expand multipurpose and container transport through utilizing each other's land and marine transport and also transit of goods to third countries, the Central Asian states in particular, through Iran's southern ports.

Necessary measures are also to be taken for setting up hangar and repair of aircraft and offering other services through the formation of a joint company at Imam Khomeyni international airport, southern Tehran. Tehran and Paris have also agreed to provide airport facilities at Imam Khomeyni international airport to offer more services to the passengers of the air line of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Homa, and also establish cooperation between Homa and Air France by allowing Iran Air flights to land at Paris's Charles de Gaulle Airport instead of Orly Airport.

The agreement also envisages land transport and also transit as well as offering the necessary facilities for the interntional land transport companies of Iran and France.

Pons, the first senior French official to visit Iran in five years, arrived here on Sunday on a four-day official visit and has held talks with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and several other Iranian senior officials.

Iran: Construction Agreements Signed With France

LD2802195096 Tehran IRNA in English
1911 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — A cooperation agreement was inked here today following the second round of talks between Iran's minister of Housing and Urban Development Abbas Ahmad Akhundi and visiting French Minister of Public Works, Transport and Tourism Bernard Pons.

The agreement calls for the two countries' cooperation and exchange of experiences in urban services and the construction of houses and buildings.

Terming his visit to Iran as "positive and "frutiful", the French minister hoped for further expansion of bilateral ties.

Pons and his delegation arrived here Sunday [25 February] morning at the invitation by Iran's Minister of Roads and Transport Akbar Torkan.

Iran: IRAN NEWS Predicts Better Future in Ties With France

LD2702140496 Tehran IRNA in English 0934 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — A better future is expected in Irano-French relations as the present Gaullist sway in France has strong tendencies to follow policies independent from Britain and the United States, said the English daily 'IRAN NEWS'.

In its editorial Tuesday, it noted that Supply Minister Bernard Pons, a prominent member of the French government and a close ally of President Jacques Chirac, is currently in Tehran for talks related to bilateral issues.

"Irano-French relations took a healthy turn following the culmination of the Islamic revolution in 1979, due to the fact that France hosted the late Imam Khomeyni in Paris from where he directed and guided the Iranian nation at the peak of the Islamic revolution," the paper recalled. While relations ebbed when the socialists extended all possible military and economic aid to Baghdad during the imposed war as well as providing refuge to anti-Iranian terrorists, the Gaullist return to power, however, paved for the expansion of Tehran-Paris ties, it wrote.

"It was then that the French realized that they should not put all their Middle Eastern eggs in Saddam Husayn's basket," the article said, adding that some French statesmen publicly admitted that French policy was wrong.

It noted that while Paris faced pressure from the U.S. and Britain to keep a distance from Tehran, France realized that it needed a new policy in the Middle East and has found that Iran is the best conduit for promoting its relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Iran: Hungary Seeks Cooperation Between MTI, IRNA

LD2702095796 Tehran IRNA in English 0902 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — Hungarian Ambassador to Tehran Istvan Telli, in a meeting Monday with managing director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Fereydun Verdinejad, called for promotion of cooperation between the mass media of the two countries.

Telli described the December visit to Tehran of managing director of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI), Karoly Alexa, as very beneficial, adding that with the signing and implementation of the contract between the two news agencies, the ground has been provided for expanding Tehran-Budapest cooperation.

IRNA is an advanced news agency in the region, the Hungarian diplomat noted and said that Iran and Hungary have numerous potentials for political and economic cooperation.

Verdinejad expressed pleasure with IRNA-MTI relations, stressing that it is necessary to expand ties.

Direct exchange of news between the two agencies as well as news cooperation at regional and international levels are the main points of cooperation between IRNA and MTI, he said.

The IRNA chief also called for agreements that could foster cooperation among other forms of mass media in the two countries.

Iran: Diplomat Meets With Argentine Senate President

LD2702132596 Tehran IRNA in English 1153 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — Iran's temporary charge d'affaires to Argentina 'Ali Saqqaeian met on Monday with the Speaker of the Argentine Senate Eduardo Menem.

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and emphasized the need to exchange parliamentary delegations and establish parliamentary friendship groups.

Saqqaeian appreciated the Argentine Government for its refusal to join the U.S.-sponsored economic embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Iranian diplomat enumerating the conspiracies hatched by the U.S. Administration against Iran, condemned Washington for its anti- Iran activities.

He also submitted a message from Iranian Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri to the Argentine Senate president.

Menem rejecting any unilateral sanction against Iran welcomed expansion of bilateral relations in all areas, particularly in setting up parliamentary friendship groups and exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two states.

Iran: Habibi Meets Leaders of Palestinian Groups, Amal Leadership

LD2902095996 Tehran IRNA in English 0823 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 29, IRNA — The leaders of some 10 combatant Palestinian groups met with the visiting Iranian first vice-president, Hasan Habibi, here on Wednesday.

The leaders expressed their gratitude to the supreme leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, and the Iranian nation for their support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist usurpers.

They stressed that the martyrdom of the Palestinian combatants by the Zionists will cause no flaw in their resistance against the Zionist enemies.

Condemning the so-called peace process and compromise with the Zionists, the Palestinian leaders pointed out the people in the region have a deep insight into the crimes committed by the U.S. and Zionist regime and also the plots hatched by them against the opppressed Palestinians.

Habibi appreciated the cordial and sincere feelings of the Palestinian people toward the Iranian nation.

He added that the glorious rallies held by the people in Islamic Iran and other Muslim countries on the international al-Quds Day demonstrating their support for the Palestinians' struggle against the Zionists indicate the emphasis placed by the Islamic world and vigilant Muslims on the struggle against the Zionist regime for liberating the holy Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

Habibi went on to say that the common cultural background shared by the Iranian people and other world Muslims is a great asset backing the struggles of the Palestinian combatants.

"I foresee a bright future for the Palestinian groups and the people in the region achieved by their struggle against expansionism of the usurper Zionist regime," Habibi noted.

In a separate development, the head of the political council of the Lebanese Amal Movement, Haisam Jom'eh, along with some members of the movement's leadership conferred with the Iranian first vice- president here Wednesday night.

At the meeting, Habibi reiterated that the only way to confront the Zionist enemy is the unity among all groups seeking common objectives in struggle against the Zionist regime.

Briefing the Iranian vice-president on the latest developments in Lebanon and the region, Jom'eh stressed that the entire efforts made in the region by the U.S. and the Zionist regime are aimed at undermining the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He added that the Lebanese Amal Movement views Iran as a powerful country inspiring Muslims throughout the world. "We appreciate Iran's stands and would like to cooperate and join forces with this great Islamic country," he said.

Nepal

Nepal: Maoist 'People's War' Continues in West

BK2702134796 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 27 Feb 96

[Report by Jogendra Ghimire and Rajendra Gyawali — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nepalgunj, Feb 26 — As the "people's war" launched by the CPN [Communist Party of Nepal] (Maoist) continues in the mid-western region, the administrations in the affected districts appear less than equipped to maintain law and order.

Although claiming the overall situation to be under control, talking to The Kathmandu Post over telephone, CDOs [chief district officers] of the hill districts of Rukum, Rolpa and Jajarkot said the administration did not have reached to various pockets of the districts thus making maintenance of order difficult. "We have been asking for more force to maintain order but have not received," CDO of Rukum said. "Even the force that the Home Ministry agreed to deploy has not reached the district."

Continued rain for the last few days has made things all the more difficult. The three districts are considered to be one of the remotest districts in Nepal with adverse topographics. Landslides have also been reported at some parts of the districts.

Six people were assaulted by activists in Dhuwang (Rolpa) last night, three of whom have been reported to be seriously injured. Police reached the spot-three hours' walk from the district headquarters — but the activists had taken refuge in the nearby jungle. Similarly in Gam VDC [Village Development Committee] of the same district — 84 kms from the headquarters three activists were arrested from a remote cave. They possessed rifles.

One person's arms and legs have been reportedly cut apart by activists at a place situated around seven hours' walking distance from Mushikot (Rukum's head quarters). In Muru, geletine was exploded at Tika Ram Oli's house. Police debuted to the spots have not reported back.

Three new police posts have been established at various places of Jajarkot district. Some of the places are situated at almost five days' walking distance from Khalanga, the district headquarters. The administration is making preventive arrests to avoid any untoward incident. Tak Bahadur Shahi, a primary school teacher of Sakla VDC was seriously injured in a Khukuri attack and thorny stick on 22 Feb.

CDOs say the activists' targets have been the police and the activists of other political views.

Meanwhile, five United People's Front [UPF] Political front of the CPN (Maoist) activists have been arrested from Banke district. Jung B Giri, Nain S Khadka and Roop L Tharu were arrested from Binauna while Deepak KC and Bhupal Pathak were arrested from Kohalpur and Baijapur respectively. They have been reported to be wall painting and talking in groups at street corners. SP [Superintendent of Police] Krishna P Shrestha denied comments on the issue.

The administration is treating the entire movement as a law and order problem and slapping criminal charges against those arrested. Those causing physical incapacity are being charged with cases of attempted murder while those involved in arson and looting are being charged with cases on public order and security.

UPF supporters here consider the issue a political problem requiring political solution. "The activities are only reactions to the suppressive moves of the administration against the first phase of the movement — the 'siege' movement late last year," said a UPF supporter requesting anonymity.

Police sources say the activities of the UPF are being conducted in planned phases. They are targeting police posts in the first phase and plan to target capitalists in the second. "UPF's movement is being conducted in exactly the same way as the intelligence sources had reported about five months back."

A special features of the movement has been the way the UPF activists are dressed. UPF activists in Rukum and Jajarkot were reportedly dressed in blue pants and blue shirts. Those in Rolpa were dressed in green pants and shirts. They all wore red masks with only their eyes visible. The administration, which considers the dressed activists as "guerrillas", hasn't arrested any of such activists.

Sources say the UPF activists are of three categories. Fresh recruits serve as "volunteers" and become members of the "defence force" after three years and eventually, if considered able, become guerrillas.

Nepal: Death Toll in Maoist 'People's War' Rises to 8

BK2902111596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 29 Feb 96

[Report by Jogendra Ghimire and Rajendra Gyawali — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nepalgunj, Feb 28 — One more person has been added to the list of casualties in the ongoing "peoples' war" in the hills of the mid-western region, bringing the recent toll to eight.

Meanwhile, wall painting and slogan chanting has spread to Banke, Bardiya, Kalikot and Salyan.

Reports received here today say one person was assaulted to death yesterday by UPF [United People's Front] activists in Whama VDC [Village Development Committee] of Rolpa district. The police sent to the site hasn't reported back to the district headquarters.

The dead had recently defected to Nepali Congress. Six UPF activists had been killed in a police encounter yesterday morning in Pipalkot VDC of Rukum district in which both sides exchanged fires.

The police had gone to Pipalkot to rescue Narajit Basnet a school teacher whose left hand was cut apart from the wrist besides two fingers of the right hand. The activists, who denied him medicare, fled with his right hand. People in a nearby village, about half an hours walk, didn't come to the spot for fear of activists and police, it is learnt. Basnet was attacked by the UPF activists after they failed to find their actual target Narajit's brother Deuchand who, having known of the possible attack, took refuge in the district headquarters. People in the district are receiving letters threatening their lives.

Meanwhile, the six killed in the encounter have been identified as Man B Khatri, Kul B Khatri, Khadga B Khatri, Dal B Khatri, Pashupati Khatri and Liladhar Jaisi.

Rukum today witnessed a rise in the cases of arson DDC [District Development Committee] chairman Hari Bhakta Oli told The Kathmandu Post that five houses had been burnt in Jhula, Bafikot and Simdi village development committees. Out of them, three belonged to Sashi Ram Khatri in Jhula and one to police constable Dhan Bahadur in Bafikot. The owner of the fifth has not been identified.

Reports of arson, looting and assault have been reported from Jajarkot also. Police details have not been received till late Wednesday.

The two hand-cuffed activists, who fought with the police and jumped down a steep cliff in an attempt to abscond, have been identified as Man Bahadur Raut and Man Bahadur Oli. The remaining five of the seven arrested have been detained at Dalli police post. They were being brought to district headquarters from Laha village, about fourteen hours walking distance from the headquarters. They youngest among the five is reported to be seventeen.

Meanwhile, MP Binod Kumar Shah and his wife are reported to have been manhandled by Nepal Workers and Peasants Party [NWPP] activists in Chamunda VDC in Dailekh. Shah, who had defected to the CPN-UML

[Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist] from NWPP is learnt to have been man handled in the presence of the police and has now been brought to the district headquarters.

CPN-UML district secretary Dip B Khad told The Kathmandu Post that the police had to make six rounds of blank fire to Shah's rescue. Khad suspects the NWPP activists may have taken inspiration from the Maoist activists. NWPP activists chanted slogans demanding Shah's resignation. A police source said Shah's now unsafe in his district where NWPP workers outnumber CPN-UML workers.

Four people in Dailekh and seven in Rolpa district headquarters have been arrested today. They were caught while wall painting or chanting Maoist slogans.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Discusses Electoral Reforms, Stock Market, Karachi

BK2802141496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the government has presented a comprehensive electoral reform package to the nation in order to eliminate all kinds of election rigging. She was talking to reporters in Islamabad yesterday at the residence of National Assembly Member Nawaz Khokar, where she went to offer condolences over the death of Khokar's mother.

Rejecting opposition allegations that the electoral reforms are aimed at manipulating the election results, Bhutto said: We have made the election process as transparent as possible. She said the package is the outcome of consensus, as both the government and the opposition agreed on it, and it is based on the white paper issued by the People's Democratic Alliance after the 1990 election rigging. Under the new system, transparent ballot boxes will be used to prevent anyone from casting a bogus vote. Polling stations will be located in government buildings. There will be restrictions against setting up polling stations in the private homes and factories of candidates because there are ample opportunities for rigging and manipulation.

The prime minister said the government has decided to hold the national and provincial elections on the same day to bring down election costs. The provinces, however, can hold elections on some other day if they wish. She said election costs can be reduced up to 50 percent in this manner, and this will also encourage candidates from among the middle class and professionals to enter the hitherto expensive field of politics. She said that, similarly, the display of big posters and banners and the writing of election slogans on walls has been prohibited, which will not only reduce costs but will also keep the country clean. Moreover, she said, voter lists will be computerized to eliminate any chance of bogus voters.

In response to a question on doing away with the system of producing identity cards before casting votes, Bhutto said this is aimed at discouraging the use of fake identity cards. She said another important decision in this regard is that the election results will be announced by district returning officers. Previously, the results had to pass through the hands of several officials; thus, there were ample chances to alter them. In response to a question on holding elections earlier than scheduled, Bhutto said the country needs stability, and the implementation of long-term projects is essential for socioeconomic development. She said that members belonging to both sides of the National Assembly fully understand that holding frequent elections is in nobody's interest, and it casts negative effects on foreign investment and the national economy.

Regarding minority voting rights, Bhutto said this right was granted to them through an amendment to the 1975 Constitution. She said that minorities have been granted the right to a double vote: They can not only cast their votes in support of their minority candidates, but can exercise their right to vote in the general elections as well.

Responding to a question on the fluctuations in the stock exchange, she said the country's main economic indicators are its economic growth rate, which has risen considerably, and domestic borrowing and the budget deficit, which have decreased. The prime minister reiterated her desire that there should be talks between the government and the opposition to resolve national issues.

In response to a question on the situation in Karachi, she said: We are ready even now to hold negotiations with the Altaf Group, but we want them to lay down their arms first. She said that Altaf Hussain, the chief of the Altaf Group, should look to the Pakistani Parliament and not the European Parliament to resolve the Karachi dispute. Welcoming the meeting of Altaf Group Senator Ishtiaq Azhar with the president, she said: We are keeping our doors open for negotiations.

Pakistan: President, Foreign Minister Meet Japanese Mission

BK2802150296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan has serious threat perceptions due to recent Indian nuclear activities and its nuclear capable missiles. He was talking to the special assistant to the Japanese foreign minister, who called on him in Islamabad today. The special assistant, Mr. Shinichi Yanai, is leading an economic and technical cooperation mission.

The president said Indian Prithvi missile is Pakistan specific, which is a cause of regional tension. He reiterated Pakistan's willingness to sign [Nuclear] Nonproliferation Treaty as soon as India signs. He said Pakistan wants to have peace and peaceful solution of long-standing Kashmir issue with India. He said the entire region would benefit from the major development projects in case the Kashmir and Afghanistan conflicts are solved peacefully.

The president said being the only country having membership of the Islamic Conference and SAARC [South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation], Pakistan could act as a window to Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. The president appreciated Japan's role as the major donor to Pakistan. He said we are looking forward to Japanese private sector to invest in Pakistan. Mr. Shinichi Yanai appreciated Pakistan's role for the regional peace and security and assured Japanese willingness to work together for economic cooperation and improved bilateral trade.

The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has appreciated economic cooperation between Pakistan and Japan. During a meeting with the Japanese economic delegation in Islamabad, he explained Pakistan's economic policies and security situation in the region. The mission, led by the special assistant to the Japanese foreign minister, Mr. Shinichi Yanai, reviewed the follow up of the recent visit to Japan by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Pakistan: Japanese Delegation Discusses Aid With President Leghari

OW2802142896 Tokyo KYODO in English
1346 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb. 28 KYODO — An 18-member Japanese mission met President Farooq Leghari and Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali on Wednesday [28 February] for talks on Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Pakistan's economic policies.

The Japanese mission, headed by Shinichi Yanai, special assistant to Foreign Minister Yukihito Ikeda, is on a weeklong visit to consult with government leaders and officials on medium- and long-term Japanese aid and related economic policies.

Yanai lauded the government's efforts to improve the investment climate and said Japan was also keen to boost economic and bilateral ties with Pakistan.

The mission has already had talks with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her economic adviser, V.A. Jaffery.

RADIO PAKISTAN reported Leghari had also briefed the mission about growing security threats to Pakistan resulting from India's nuclear program and the problems in Indian-held Kashmir.

Pakistan: Report Views Japanese Economic Mission's Visit to Islamabad

BK2802104596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English
28 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Rana Mubashir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The visiting high level Japanese mission on economic and technical cooperation had an extensive session of discussion with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto here Tuesday.

The eighteen-member Japanese delegation including officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, international trade and industry, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, transport, construction and the economic planning agency showed keen interest in strengthening cooperation in the economic, industrial, agriculture and environmental domains, sources revealed.

The prime minister dilated upon the economic policies of her government and the increasing Indian brutalities in held Kashmir plus the security situation in the region.

The delegation expressed its satisfaction on the government's policy of deregulation, privatisation, expenditure management and encouragement of private investment in infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector.

The delegates explained in detail the general policy of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the basis of Japanese economic cooperation with Pakistan.

Earlier, the first secretary in the embassy of Japan, Hiroto Hirakoba, elaborating Japan's ODA charter principles stated:

1. Any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts should be avoided.

2. Full attention should be paid to trends in recipient countries' military expenditures, their development and production of mass destruction weapons including missiles.

3. Attention should be paid for promoting democratisation and introduction of a market-oriented economy

and the situation regarding the securing of basic human rights and freedoms in the recipient country.

4. Environmental conservation and development should be pursued in tandem.

The Japanese mission would hold further meetings on February 28 and wrap up their discussions on February 29, the source mentioned.

Pakistan: PAF, Dassault Talks on Mirage Purchase Enter 'Final Phase'

BK2802111896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 28 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Dassault, the French manufacturers of Mirage 2000-5 aircraft and the Pakistan Air Force [PAF] have entered into the "final phase" of technical discussions for the sale/purchase of the aircraft.

According to sources, a high-powered Dassault team has arrived here on a week-long visit to finalise every detail of the Mirage deal, which has been approved by the French president.

Comprising more than two dozen technical experts, the Dassault delegation and holding a series of meetings at air headquarters. "We think this is the final round of technical financial talks before formal talks start at the government-to-government level," said official sources. If the deal goes through, the total package will cost Pakistan around US$ 3 billion.

Pakistan has already handed over the list of systems it wants: avionics, weapons, maintenance and ground support equipment — to the manufacturer of the Mirage 2000-5, a non-battle-tested aircraft. Because of this the current talks are expected to continue for another week.

Presently, each Mirage is available at the cost of around US$ 35 million, but with the systems Pakistan wants installed the price per unit has become more than US$ 90 million. Because of the exorbitant tag, Pakistan is pleading for a softer credit line.

During its stay in Pakistan, the Dassault delegation will also meet experts at the aeronautical complex in Kamra and the defence production division.

Pakistan: Former Army Chief Denies Nuclear Program 'Capped' in 1989

BK2802112796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 28 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Former army chief General (Retd) Mirza Aslam Beg has refuted ex-US ambassador Robert Oakley's assertion that Pakistan's nuclear programme had been capped in 1989. He said Tuesday that only the level of uranium enrichment had been downgraded that year.

"How could that joker even dare sit with me for a face-to-face meeting?" Beg asked, answering a question at a seminar organised by his FRIENDS in collaboration with Hans Seidel foundation on "the peace process in Afghanistan." He said he had never made any commitment to Oakley.

However, Beg admitted that the level of uranium enrichment had been downgraded from 95 per cent to 5 per cent, which could be reversed in the matter of a few days, and pointed out that re-heating of the enrichment process posed no problems. He did not like the use of the word "capping" for that development by Oakley.

Pakistan: Report Views Drug Barons' 'Added Influence' in Politics

BK2902094196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Rana Mubashir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The all powerful club of drug barons has started enjoying added influence in the political system of the country, paving way for them to escape punishment.

Indicating this, the annual report for the year 1995, released by International Narcotics Control Board here Wednesday, says the country's "liberal financial regulations and policies for money laundering activities are often facilitated."

The board has expressed its concern about the extent of illicit pushing and abuse of narcotics and has urged the government to give highest priority in implementing the federal narcotics laws and regulations in tribal areas where there is substantial illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing and trafficking.

The successful law enforcement action in Pakistan is often not followed by the punishment of drug pushers and the board has invited the government to combat corruption and the political influence of criminals.

The report urged the government to pay more attention to money- laundering activities, which are often facilitated by liberal regulations and policies.

It is usually impossible to establish link between a seized drug shipment and the brain behind the drug trafficking organisation. The report says the exact figures of money of criminal origin are unknown but they have apparently run into several hundred billion dollars a year and exceed the gross national product of most of the countries. The board feels that illicit cannabis cultivation and cannabis resin production have continued in Afghanistan at a large scale. Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to be suppliers of illicit drug markets in Europe. The illicit trafficking of cannabis resin continues to create problems for the transit countries in West Asia and Europe.

However, the report appreciates that the illicit poppy cultivation and opium production have been reduced in Pakistan, mainly in those districts where projects for integrated development are being implemented.

The report says a mission of International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) which visited Pakistan in June 1995, is aware of the external and internal difficulties faced by the country (the unstable situation in Afghanistan and the non-enforcement of the federal law in tribal areas), hindering efforts of the government to deal with the problems in a concerted manner.

The law enforcement actions which have led to the seizure of substantial amount of cannabis resin and opium are also esteemed by the board.

The board thought that the new administrative structure, the new control of narcotics substances ordinance 1995, the increased regional and bilateral cooperation and the ongoing UNDCP [UN Drug Control Program] assistance will allow the government to effectively combat the drug problem.

The board recommends the government to strengthen its control of illicit trade in phenobarbital and other psychotropic substances as provided by the 1971 Convention as well as the cooperation between national agencies in the control of precursors.

Anthony Buckingham, Director Regional office for South-West Asia of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and Dil Jan Khan, member of INCB explained the salient features of the report.

Pakistan: Senator Reports on 'Positive' Government-MQM Talks

BK2902091596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by Shahzak Badar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Senator Ishtiaq and the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] team had a two-hour long meeting with the President at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday. The meeting began at 3.30 pm and continued till 5.30 pm. Senator Ishtiaq did not reveal the content of the discission but just said that the talks with the President were positive.

The President, he said, was fully aware of the problems of the MQM for he was receiving all the fax messages from '90. The Senator said that the President was apprised of the MQM grievances. It is noteworthy that this time the Senator and the MQM team were not put through physical body search by the guards at the Presidency. A similar meeting in the past could not take place because the MQM team was offended at the presidency when they were asked to undergo physical body search prior to meeting the President.

This is the first meeting of the MQM members with the President after a year.

APP adds: Senator Syed Ishtiaq Azhar Convenor of MQM Altaf Group's Coordination Committee described his meeting with President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari as "positive" however remained tight-lipped about the details.

"There was no agenda for the meeting but it was positive and we are satisfied," was all he had to say after the meeting.

Senator Ishtiaq Azhar was accompanied by Qazi Khalid MPA [Member of Provincial Assembly], head of the Legal Aid Committee of the MQM and member of the MQM negotiating team with the government.

Responding to the queries of the newsmen soon after his meeting with the President without specifying, Senator Ishtiaq Azhar said, "We discussed all our issues, like the situation in Karachi. We did not take any written material with us as we have been continually faxing him our complaints and grievances." Ishtiaq Azhar said, "We will inform our leadership in London about the talks."

When questioned how soon the results of the meeting will be evident, Azhar said, "It was too early to comment about it," however added, "These talks can't be called fruitless. The President is the Head of the State and we informed him about our grievances.

Its up to him what step he takes."

He said, "We held talks with the President on the directions we received from London."

To a question about his plans to hold a meeting with the Chief of Army Staff, Azhar said, "We had sent him a letter from London, and now they have acknowledged to have received it."

When asked aobut the contents of the letter, he said, "It was long time back and I can't remember what it contained."

When he was questioned whether he discussed the withdrawal of cases agaisnt Altaf Hussain, Ishtiaq said, "This was never an issue and we did not discuss it."

When asked if Altaf Hussain was willing to come to the negotiations table, he said, he may, but if the Prime Minister is willing too. "We have not yet received any indication that she is willing to hold talks."

To yet another question, Azhar said, "We have a pact with the ANP [Auami National Party] and will inform its members and leaders about the outcome of talks with the President.

Pakistan: Editorial Views CIA Prediction of India's Disintegration

BK2802122496 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Indian Disintegration"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US established a "State Failure Task Force" last year in response to US Vice-President Al Gore's directive to undertake a study designed to ascertain why countries fall apart. In its recently-completed report, the Task Force has predicted the disintegration of India. The report bases its assessment on 29 variables, including per capita income and infant mortality. What is interesting about India is not the fact that its per capita is low and infant mortality high, for after all this is the case in most Third World countries, but the fact that these variables have witnessed a decline in their performance. "Poor democracies that don't improve living standards are exceptionally vulnerable," the report concludes, an aphorism that is obviously credible since a democratically-elected government is unlikely to keep its hold on power if it is unable to show some improvement in the performance of key social and physical sectors.

A dictatorship, not reliant on the popular vote, will not be threatened quite as much as would a democracy if the economic indicators do not improve. The report laments that, in spite of being cognisant of its failures in the economic arena and the consequent lurking political dangers, the Indian government continues to spend millions of dollars on defence equipment. The motive behind this self-destructive propensity is not that easy to comprehend. India, unlike Pakistan, is not threatened by any other regional power. On the contrary, its hegemonistic designs are well-known to all the other countries in the region, specifically the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] member states.

The CIA report is so convinced about the accuracy of its findings that it has expressed its desire to conduct a study to determine the "glue" that holds India together. India has stationed more than six hundred thousand troops in Kashmir alone, almost as many as the entire Pakistani army. Its human rights violations, its attempt to browbeat the Kashmiri freedom-fighters into some form of acquiescence and its proclivity to stop at nothing, be it state sponsored murder, pillage or rape, accounts for its failure to stop the Kashmiris from breaking away. Other Indian states, such as East Punjab, which have expressed a desire to break free have also been subjected to similar military operations. This leads many analysts to believe that it is the army and its use in the internal politics of the country that may be the "glue" which holds India together. Be that as it may, the international community must also take the responsibility for keeping India intact. The fact that India has successfully rejected all foreign concerns for human rights violations, specifically in Kashmir, at bay, by simply stating that Kashmir is an internal matter goes to show the lack of will of the international community in trying to resolve the matter in a befitting manner. It is high time that, like in other problem areas in the rest of the world, the international community takes appropriate action against the Indian government.

Pakistan: Editorial Criticizes CIA 'Dirty Tricks' Department

BK2902090596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Protecting Our Interests"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The unabating campaign to pressurise the US administration into imposing sanctions on Pakistan and China for the alleged transfer of nuclear weapons-related technology from the latter continues through planted stories in the American media and in Congress. The administration for its part has told US legislators that it does not have conclusive evidence of the alleged transfer and has therefore put the issue on hold for the moment. The American press has begun to also warn against the dangers of an acrimonious and unnecessary collision with China, in an attempt, as one US paper put it, to replace the old cold war bogey of the Soviet Union with China today. In the course of this inspired campaign of China-bashing, the anti-Pakistan lobby too has found common cause with this new breed of cold warriors without a cold war.

A report in this paper has focused on the possibility that the confusion caused by the diverse and contradictory voices emanating from Washington, whether from the White House or Capitol Hill, is likely to exacerbate anti-US feelings in Pakistan and resurrect those forces which characterise the US as the "Great Satan". The report warns that if the US does not undo the damage being caused by this obviously orchestrated campaign, all the goodwill for the US in Pakistan that was on the way to being restored because of the one- time waiver to the Pressler sanctions through the passage of the Brown Amendment, stands threatened with reversal. The report is categorical that this does not sit well with US interests in the region and Washington should refrain from shooting itself in the foot by targeting Pakistan in this replay of the discriminatory treatment under Pressler which had strained relations in the first place.

The Pak-US relationship, however, has always been, and continues to be, an unequal one. It is therefore wishful thinking to suggest that Pakistan can exert anything resembling effective pressure on the US to persuade it to change its policy or risk losing Pakistani goodwill. What value Washington places on that good will is a question that revolves around US perceptions of our regional and geo-strategic importance for American interests. Certainly the treatment Pakistan has received at Washington's hands over the years points to the pitfalls of putting all our foreign policy eggs in one basket.

It is because it is a presidential election year in the US that President Clinton's opponents have chosen the so-called nuclear technology transfer stick to beat China and Pakistan with and in the process embarrass his administration. The fact that it may end up harming American interests in both China and South Asia does not concern the critics. The dirty tricks department of the CIA is working overtime and even its Director has lent his testimony to the chorus of detractors. The whole babble has served admirably to divert attention from India's threatened second nuclear test and its deployment of nuclear-capable, Pakistan-specific missiles such as the Prithvi on our borders.

This pattern of victimising the potential victim of threatened aggression while allowing the aggressor to go scot-free has characterised Washington's towards the problems of proliferation and security in South Asia for some years now. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the vested interest lobbies agitating the so-called proliferation "threat" from Pakistan include the time-honoured Indian and Israeli lobbies. While advice to Washington to reassess its interest in the region may or may not find an audience in the US, Pakistan should realistically and objectively look to its own interests and examine how those can be protected and promoted and what options if any allow an escape from the clutches of a one track reliance on the only, remaining superpower which has proved to be an inconsistent friend always.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Rumor of LTTE Submarines 'Scotched' by Official Sources

BK2802162596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 28 Feb 96

[Report by Paneetha Ameresekere—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DEFENCE sources on Monday [26 February] nailed the rumour that a submarine had been sighted off the seas of Negombo, as a canard.

A fact finding mission under Lieutenant Commander Collombage interviewed scores of fishermen and members of fisheries societies in the area, but failed to come across a single person who had sighted this submarine.

"Recently too there was a rumour of a submarine being sighted, but upon investigation we found that it was a shoal of fish", these sources said.

The rumour that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] had acquired submarines, too were scotched by official sources.

"Submarines operating worldwide belong to the navies of various countries, no private parties own such ships, even if the terrorists are gifted with a submarine, it would take them years to train their cadre in submarine warfare", they said.

A single torpedo by itself is a very costly item, they said.

Even if the navy sells all their ships, it would still be inadequate for them to buy a submarine. A single torpedo alone costs a tidy sum, reliable sources said.

"What the terrorists have in their possession are one man operated auto scooters, or midget submarines generally used by divers, they said.

The terrorists pack these scooters with explosives and launch suicidal attacks on unsuspecting ships, authoritative sources said.

"These midget submarines which have a maximum speed of of 3 1/2 knots are no match for even the navy's heavy ships which can achieve a speed of 11 knots (11 miles per hour)", defence sources said.

Further, the batteries required to power these scooters last less than two hours, they said.

However as a precautionary measure the navy has stepped up their patrols of the Negombo and Kalpitiya seas.

Sri Lanka: Security Forces Counter LTTE Attack on Ethawetunaweva

BK2802162396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 28 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SECURITY forces yesterday countered an attack on the Ethawetunaweva in the Weli Oya area by nearly 100 Tigers, killing 16 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres and wounding several others.

Official sources said the troops countered with mortars and artillery forcing the Tigers to flee with the dead and the wounded.

Troops also recovered, three automatic rifles, a radio set, four claymore mines, a large haul of ammunition, medicine and dry rations left by the retreating Tigers.

According to reports three soldiers, three home guards and two civilians were also wounded.

The area had been cordoned off and search operations are continuing, police said.

Our Anurdhapura Group Correspondent said the Tigers had kidnapped two villagers in the adjoining village on the previous day.

Meanwhile, 11 civilians including five soldiers were killed last week in a similar attack by the LTTE in a village in Anuradhapura.

Recently troops killed 20 Tigers when nearly 150 Tigers attacked an army detachment in Kinniyadi in the Batticaloa district.

Meanwhile, our Trincomalee district correspondent said that the security forces found an LMG and three hand grenades left behind by a group of fleeing LTTE terrorists during a search operation at Pesalai in Batticaloa on Monday. The operation followed the abortive LTTE attack on the Pesalai security forces detachment on February 24.

Another report said a police constable was injured when a group of terrorists exploded a bomb near the police check point near Kali kovil in Trincomalee town around 7 pm on Monday. The injured policeman is warded at the Trincomalee hospital.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Reports Government Troop Attacks, Atrocities

BK2802141096 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Sri Lankan Air Force airplane bombed Weligama and the border areas of Vadamarachchi. This attack took place around 1500 yesterday evening. The bridge and the coconut grove area in Vellai and the Achchuveli Christian Church area experienced bombing raids by Sri Lankan Government troops. There were missile attacks against these areas prior to the attack by a Pucara aircraft supported by a helicopter. Simultaneous missile attacks and firing also came from the Mullaitivu military camp on the evening of 20 February.

A young woman proceeding to Colombo was arrested at the Tandikkulam detention camp and taken away by Sri Lankan troops. The troops detained the woman, who was accompanied by her mother, five days ago and allowed her mother to proceed to Colombo. Although the woman's mother has stayed at the Veppankulam camp to secure the release of her daughter and has made several trips to the camp to inquire about her, the troops continue to detain the woman under the pretext of a continuing investigation.

Travelers to Vavuniya have been brutally assaulted by the Sri Lankan military. This incident took place yesterday. Although the incidents of torture and harassment of Tamil travelers continue, the Sri Lankan military attacked them yesterday with rifle butts, iron bars, and canes. A number of travelers sustained serious injuries. Fearing the Sri Lankan troops' brutal approach, travelers have suspended their trips and returned to the north.

It has been learned that Sri Lankan troops are planning to launch another military operation in the north by limiting the movement of Tamils in Colombo and Vavuniya as much as possible. The latest moves by the Sri Lankan Government reflect this fact.

It is understood that the operation to retrieve bodies from the debris of the Central Bank building, damaged in the recent bomb blasts, is progressing very slowly. Eight bodies are believed to be buried in the debris, as they have not yet been retrieved from the Central Bank building.

In the meantime, Sri Lankan troops have intensified security in Colombo. A correspondent from Colombo reports that sandbags have been stacked in most places, and security forces are taking up positions. Because of a fear that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] might strike at economic centers, security has been further tightened in those areas.

Sri Lankan troops have arrested beggars in Anuradhapura en masse. These sudden arrests are being made on the suspicion that these beggars have been spying for the LTTE and providing it with information. The troops surrounding Anuradhapura have rounded up 150 beggars thus far. A senior Sri Lankan police official has told REUTERS that these beggars go everywhere without being hindered. Dressed in tatters, they can gather information about the situation in a city and monitor the movement of important figures.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the movement of Buddhist monks in the southern part of the country has also been hampered. The monks are being viewed with suspicion by Sri Lankan troops, following intelligence reports that there is a possibility that Tigers dressed in the garb of Buddhist monks are traveling in the southern region.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Details Simultaneous Attack on Troops

BK2902071396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] launched simultaneous attacks on three military camps located in different places in Batticaloa District. The attack that took place at dawn yesterday lasted for about two hours. As the LTTE rapid action contingents carried out attacks on the military camps located at Batticaloa-Polonnaruwa junction and Navaladi early in the morning, another LTTE contingent attacked the Pettalai military camp located in Valaichchenai. At the same time, the LTTE also launched surprise attacks on the Kinnaiyadi military camp. The reinforcements that rushed to the help of the troops were also intercepted and attacked. Although the Sri Lankan military suffered heavy losses, there have been no reports on the losses.

As a result of the stepped up attacks by the LTTE in the east, the movements of Sri Lankan troops have been greatly limited. Street patrols have been called off. Troops have been confined within their barracks at several locations. The military commander for the Eastern Province has issued an urgent appeal saying as the security forces contingents deployed in the east are in a critical condition, sufficient troop reinforcements should be dispatched forthwith to improve the situation.

Although Colonel Ratwatte has plans for another major military operation in the north and is getting ready for an offensive, there have been considerable objections to his plans in defense circles. Pointing out the situation in the east and the security concerns in Colombo, these circles suggest that after normalizing the situation there, the next phase military operations can be considered. Colonel Ratwatte is said to have been very much involved in the preparations for a military operation.

The Sri Lankan armed forces launched heavy missile attacks from Vettilaikerni military camp toward the coastal areas of Thalayadi. Bomber aircraft, which were rushed to the area around 0815 yesterday morning after the missile attacks, resorted to bombing raids in the area. There is no report of any damage.

The Air Force also carried out raids on Tondaimanar and Walala localities. A helicopter that hovered at an high altitude in the area at about 0715 yesterday morning resorted to indiscriminate caliber [preceding word rendered in English] attacks. Thereafter, missile attacks were launched toward Walala locality also around 1100 in the morning.

Travelers from the north who pass through Tandikkulam are only permitted to pass in limited numbers. Sri Lankan troops, who are permitting only a specific and small number of travelers, sent the rest back. A large number of travelers who arrived in Tandikkulam yesterday morning also returned after much disappointment.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Reports Attack on Troops in Anuradhapura

BK2902080896 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] launched a surprise attack on a Sri Lankan security post set up at Manikkawewa, the occupied Tamil village in Keppitipola of Anuradhapura District. Two soldiers, two policemen, and five homeguards were killed in the attack that took place in the evening on the day before yesterday. Several others sustained serious injuries. Sri Lankan troops fled and escaped with injuries as they could not face the intensity of LTTE's onslaught. A number of weapons were seized by the LTTE during this attack. It should be noted that the Sri Lankan troops, who ousted the ethnic Tamils from the village belonging to the Tamils, settled Sinhalese people, provided them with arms, and have been giving them protection. This attack was launched in memory of Captain Anbukkiniyan who embraced martyrdom in the raid on the Sri Lankan military post at Parakkiramapuram on 22 January. The LTTE cadres who accomplished this successful offensive returned to their base with the captured arms, having suffered no losses on their side.

Following the attack, the armed Sinhalese who were settled in the village have been returning to their native places.

It should be noted that the Sri Lankan Government, which issued a report on the attack the day before yesterday has stated that Sinhalese homeguards repulsed the LTTE attack, that the troops and police rushed to their help and fought back, and that 10 LTTE cadres were killed in the attack.

Fourteen valiant Tigers embraced martyrdom in the crucial offensive on the Kinnaiyadi military camp on 22 February. On that day, three military camps were simultaneously attacked by the LTTE and the military contingents that rushed to their help also came under attack. A report from Colombo says that the Sri Lankan side suffered heavy loss; however, there is no precise report about the losses suffered by the Sri Lankan side.

Fishermen from Pesalai and Vankalai who went out to sea on a fishing mission three days ago still have not returned home. Six fishermen, who ventured out on three boats, have been missing for the past three days. Sri Lankan naval forces are believed to have taken them into custody. In this connection, their relatives have lodged a complaint with the Sri Lankan Navy based in Talaimannar.

Indiscriminate missile attacks have been carried out from the Palali military camp. The missile attacks began at 1000 in the morning and lasted till 1100. The localities that came under attack were Gerudavil [placename as transliterated] and Tondaimanar. A few civilian houses were damaged in the attack that was carried out by the Sri Lankan troops. A few fishing trawlers have been damaged in the attacks launched toward Vadamarachchi East and Thalayadi localities.

Thanks.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Alleges Air Force Bombing in Civilian Areas

BK2902111096 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two innocent civilians were killed and four others injured in dastardly bombing raids conducted by Sri Lankan Air Force aircraft in the Pooneryn Tampirai locality. A civilian house was razed by the state-sponsored terrorism carried out by Sri Lankan Government troops at about 1440 yesterday. Two Sri Lankan supersonic jets that appeared in Pooneryn's airspace yesterday suddenly dropped three bombs one after another on civilian settlements. Rasiah Durairasa, 48, a family man who was eating lunch at his residence, was blown to pieces in the attack. His wife and children, who went out to take a bath after serving his food, escaped. Their house was extensively damaged. Five civilians in another house in the vicinity sustained injuries. Kandaiah Rajendran, 18, a civilian who was taken to Kilinochchi Hospital with grievous injuries, succumbed to his injuries.

Sri Lankan troops resorted to a sniper attacks on LTTE cadres walking on the street in Tiriyai, Trincomalee District. Four valiant Tigers were martyred in this incident the day before yesterday. We pay tribute to these national heroes who sacrificed their young and dear lives for the liberation of our motherland.

A fishing trawler caught fire and sank in a brutal attack launched by Sri Lankan naval troops on the sea north of Vadamarachchi. Two fishermen on board jumped into the sea and swam ashore. Dvora boats that were escorting a big ship from Vettilaikerni to Kankesanturai carried out the attack. At the same time, these Dvora boats resorted to indiscriminate firing on coastal areas.

The military has imposed a new regulation that trucks proceeding to Colombo from Vavuniya must pass through Beligoda and that only troops can drive the trucks along the route. A checkpost has been set up at Beliagoda on the Vavuniya-Kurunagale-Colombo route. A report emanating from the locality states that a new regulation has been imposed stipulating that only troops should operate the trucks from the checkpost to Colombo. The military has announced that this regulation relates to security in Colombo.

Sri Lankan troops deployed at the Valalai locality in Achchuveli resorted to firing artillery and 50 mm guns toward Walwai and Gerudavil localities [preceding two place names as transliterated]. There is no report of any damage.

Two villages in Amparai District have been totally neglected under the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction's rural housing program. It has been learned that these villages are being neglected because they are Tamil villages.

Thanks. The thirst of the Tigers is for a Tamil Eelam motherland.

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